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THE POETICAL WORKS OF

JAMES THOMSON

VOLUME II

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LIBERTY.

ADVERTISEMENT TO "LIBERTY."

THIS poem was originally published in 4to. in five separate parts; the first part appeared at the close of 1734, the second and third in the course of the following year, and the fourth and fifth parts in 1736; it was afterwards revised by Thomson for the 8vo. edition of his works, which was published in 1738, and the text of this edition, as containing the author's last corrections, has been followed in the present reprint. The edition which appeared after the author's death, having been extensively altered, and cut down to three books by Lord Lyttelton, has long ceased to be regarded as authentic.

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS FREDERICK, PRINCE OF WALES.

SIR,

WHEN I reflect upon that ready condescension, that preventing generosity, with which your Royal Highness received the following poem under your protection; I can alone ascribe it to the recommendation and influence of the subject. In you the cause and concerns of Liberty have so zealous a patron, as entitles whatever may have the least tendency to promote them, to the distinction of your favour. And who can entertain this delightful reflection, without feeling a pleasure far superior to that of the fondest author; and of which all true lovers of their country must participate? To behold the noblest dispositions of the prince, and of the patriot, united: an overflowing benevolence, generosity, and candour of heart, joined to an enlightened zeal for Liberty, an intimate persuasion that on it depends the happiness and glory both of kings and people: to see these shining out in public virtues, as they have hitherto smiled in all the social lights and private accom-

plishments of life, is a prospect that cannot but inspire a general sentiment of satisfaction and gladness, more easy to be felt than expressed.

If the following attempt to trace Liberty, from the first ages down to her excellent establishment in Great Britain, can at all merit your approbation, and prove an entertainment to your Royal Highness; if it can in any degree answer the dignity of the subject, and of the name under which I presume to shelter it; I have my best reward: particularly as it affords me an opportunity of declaring that I am, with the greatest zeal and respect,

SIR,

Your Royal Highness's

most obedient

and most devoted servant,

JAMES THOMSON.

ANCIENT AND MODERN ITALY COMPARED;

BEING THE FIRST PART OF

LIBERTY,

A POEM.

THE CONTENTS OF

PART I.

The following Poem is thrown into the form of a Poetical Vision. Its scene the ruins of ancient Rome. The Goddess of Liberty, who is supposed to speak through the whole, appears, characterized as British Liberty, to verse 44. Gives a view of ancient Italy, and particularly of Republican Rome, in all her magnificence and glory, to verse 112. This contrasted by modern Italy, its valleys, mountains, culture, cities, people; the difference appearing strongest in the capital city, Rome, to verse 234. The ruins of the great works of Liberty more magnificent than the borrowed pomp of Oppression; and from them revived Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture, to verse 256. The old Romans apostrophized, with regard to the several melancholy changes in Italy: Horace, Tully, and Virgil, with regard to their Tibur, Tusculum, and Naples, to verse 287. That once finest and most ornamented part of Italy, all along the coast of Baiæ, how changed, to verse 321. This desolation of Italy applied to Britain, to verse 344. Address to the Goddess of Liberty, that she would deduce from the first ages, her chief establishments, the description of which constitutes the subject of the following parts of this Poem. She assents, and commands what she says to be sung in Britain; whose happiness, arising from freedom and a limited monarchy, she marks, to verse 391. An immediate Vision attends, and paints her words. Invocation.

LIBERTY.

PART I.

ANCIENT AND MODERN ITALY COMPARED.

MY lamented Talbot![*] while with thee
The Muse gay roved the glad Hesperian round,
And drew the inspiring breath of ancient arts;
Ah! little thought she her returning verse
Should sing our darling subject to thy Shade.
And does the mystic veil, from mortal beam,
Involve those eyes where every virtue smiled,
And all thy Father's candid spirit shone?
The light of reason, pure, without a cloud;

* Charles Richard Talbot, Esq., with whom the poet travelled to Italy; he was the eldest son of Lord Chancellor Talbot. See Memoir, p. lx.

Full of the generous heart, the mild regard;
Honour disdaining blemish, cordial faith,
And limpid truth, that looks the very soul.
But to the death of mighty nations turn
My strain; be there absorbed the private tear.*
Musing, I lay; warm from the sacred walks,
Where at each step imagination burns:
While scattered wide around, awful, and hoar,
Lies, a vast monument, once glorious Rome,
The tomb of empire! ruins! that efface
Whate'er, of finished, modern pomp can boast.
Snatched by these wonders to that world where
Unfettered ranges, Fancy's magic hand [thought
Led me anew o'er all the solemn scene,
Still in the mind's pure eye more solemn dressed:
When straight, methought, the fair majestic power
Of Liberty appeared. Not, as of old,
Extended in her hand the cap, and rod,
Whose slave-enlarging touch gave double life:
But her bright temples bound with British oak,
And naval honours nodded on her brow.
Sublime of port: loose o'er her shoulder flowed
Her sea-green robe, with constellations gay.
An island-goddess now; and her high care
The Queen of Isles, the mistress of the main.
My heart beat filial transport at the sight;
And, as she moved to speak, the awakened Muse
Listened intense. Awhile she looked around,
With mournful eye the well-known ruins marked,

* The lines on his friend Mr. Talbot's death, originally designed by Thomson for the commencement of "Liberty," will be found in his letter to Dr. Cranston, at p. lxviii. of the Memoir.

And then, her sighs repressing, thus began:
"Mine are these wonders, all thou seest is mine;
But ah, how changed! the falling poor remains
Of what exalted once the Ausonian shore.
Look back through time: and, rising from the gloom,
Mark the dread scene, that paints whate'er I say.
"The great Republic see! that glowed, sublime,
With the mixed freedom of a thousand states;
Raised on the thrones of kings her curule chair,
And by her fasces awed the subject world.
See busy millions quickening all the land,
With cities thronged, and teeming culture high:
For Nature then smiled on her free-born sons,
And poured the plenty that belongs to men.
Behold, the country cheering, villas rise,
In lively prospect; by the secret lapse
Of brooks now lost, and streams renowned in song;
In Umbria's closing vales, or on the brow
Of her brown hills that breathe the scented gale:
On Baiæ's viny coast; where peaceful seas,
Fanned by kind zephyrs, ever kiss the shore;
And suns unclouded shine, through purest air:
Or in the spacious neighbourhood of Rome;
Far shining upward to the Sabine hills,
To Anio's roar, and Tibur's olive shade;
To where Prenestè lifts her airy brow;
Or downward spreading to the sunny shore,
Where Alba breathes the freshness of the main.
"See distant mountains leave their valleys dry,
And o'er the proud arcade* their tribute pour,

* The aqueducts, built upon arches, to convey water to the city.

To lave imperial Rome. For ages laid,
Deep, massy, firm, diverging every way,
With tombs of heroes sacred, see her roads;
By various nations trod, and suppliant kings;
With legions flaming, or with triumph gay.
" Full in the centre of these wondrous works,
The pride of earth! Rome in her glory see!
Behold her demigods, in senate met;
All head to counsel, and all heart to act:
The commonweal inspiring every tongue
With fervent eloquence, unbribed, and bold;
Ere tame Corruption taught the servile herd
To rank obedient to a master's voice.
" Her Forum see, warm, popular, and loud,
In trembling wonder hushed, when the two Sires,*
As they the private father greatly quelled,
Stood up the public fathers of the state.
See Justice judging there, in human shape.
Hark! how with freedom's voice it thunders high,
Or in soft murmurs sinks to Tully's tongue.
" Her tribes, her census, see; her generous troops,
Whose pay was glory, and their best reward
Free for their country and for me to die;
Ere mercenary murder grew a trade.
" Mark, as the purple triumph waves along,
The highest pomp and lowest fall of life.
" Her festive games, the school of heroes, see;
Her Circus, ardent with contending youth:
Her streets, her temples, palaces, and baths,
Full of fair forms, of Beauty's eldest born,
And of a people cast in virtue's mould:

* Lucius Junius Brutus, and Virginius.—T.

While sculpture lives around, and Asian hills
Lend their best stores to heave the pillared dome:
All that to Roman strength the softer touch
Of Grecian art can join. But language fails
To paint this sun, this centre of mankind;
Where every virtue, glory, treasure, art,
Attracted strong, in heightened lustre met.
"Need I the contrast mark? unjoyous view!
A land in all, in government and arts,
In virtue, genius, earth, and heaven, reversed;
Who but these far famed ruins to behold,
Proofs of a people, whose heroic aims
Soared far above the little selfish sphere
Of doubting modern life; who but inflamed
With classic zeal, these consecrated scenes
Of men and deeds to trace; unhappy land,
Would trust thy wilds, and cities loose of sway?
"Are these the vales, that once, exulting states
In their warm bosom fed? The mountains these,
On whose high-blooming sides my sons, of old,
I bred to glory? These dejected towns,
Where, mean and sordid, life can scarce subsist,
The scenes of ancient opulence and pomp?
"Come! by whatever sacred name disguised,
Oppression, come! and in thy works rejoice!
See nature's richest plains to putrid fens
Turned by thy fury. From their cheerful bounds,
See razed the enlivening village, farm, and seat.
First, rural toil, by thy rapacious hand
Robbed of his poor reward, resigned the plough;
And now he dares not turn the noxious glebe:
'Tis thine entire. The lonely swain himself,
Who loves at large along the grassy downs

His flocks to pasture, thy drear champaign flies.
Far as the sickening eye can sweep around,
'Tis all one desert, desolate, and grey,
Grazed by the sullen buffalo alone;
And where the rank uncultivated growth,
Of rotting ages taints the passing gale,
Beneath the baleful blast the city pines,
Or sinks enfeebled, or infected burns.
Beneath it mourns the solitary road,
Rolled in rude mazes o'er the abandoned waste;
While ancient ways, ingulfed, are seen no more.
"Such thy dire plains, thou self-destroyer! foe
To humankind! thy mountains too, profuse,
Where savage nature blooms, seem their sad plaint
To raise against thy desolating rod.
There on the breezy brow, where thriving states
And famous cities, once, to the pleased sun,
Far other scenes of rising culture spread,
Pale shine thy ragged towns. Neglected round,
Each harvest pines; the livid, lean produce
Of heartless labour: while thy hated joys,
Not proper pleasure, lift the lazy hand.
Better to sink in sloth the woes of life,
Than wake their rage with unavailing toil.
Hence drooping art almost to nature leaves
The rude unguided year. Thin wave the gifts
Of yellow Ceres, thin the radiant blush
Of orchard reddens in the warmest ray.
To weedy wildness run, no rural wealth
(Such as dictators fed*) the garden pours.
Crude the wild olive flows, and foul the vine;

* Referring to Cincinnatus.

Nor juice Cæcubian, nor Falernian, more,
Streams life and joy, save in the Muse's bowl.
Unseconded by art, the spinning race
Draw the bright thread in vain, and idly toil.
In vain, forlorn in wilds, the citron blows;
And flowering plants perfume the desert gale.
Through the vile thorn the tender myrtle twines:
Inglorious droops the laurel, dead to song,
And long a stranger to the hero's brow. [fields,
"Nor half thy triumph this: cast, from brute
Into the haunts of men thy ruthless eye.
There buxom plenty never turns her horn;
The grace and virtue of exterior life,
No clean convenience reigns; even sleep itself,
Least delicate of powers, reluctant, there,
Lays on the bed impure his heavy head.
Thy horrid walk! dead, empty, unadorned,
See streets whose echoes never know the voice
Of cheerful hurry, commerce many-tongued,
And art mechanic at his various task,
Fervent, employed. Mark the desponding race,
Of occupation void, as void of hope;
Hope, the glad ray, glanced from Eternal Good,
That life enlivens, and exalts its powers,
With views of fortune—madness all to them!
By thee relentless seized their better joys,
To the soft aid of cordial airs they fly,
Breathing a kind oblivion o'er their woes,
And love and music melt their souls away.
From feeble Justice, see how rash Revenge,
Trembling, the balance snatches; and the sword,
Fearful himself, to venal ruffians gives.
See where God's altar, nursing murder, stands,

With the red touch of dark assassins stained.
" But chief let Rome, the mighty city! speak
The full-exerted genius of thy reign.
Behold her rise amid the lifeless waste,
Expiring nature all corrupted round;
While the lone Tiber, through the desert plain,
Winds his waste stores, and sullen sweeps along.
Patched from my fragments, in unsolid pomp,
Mark how the temple glares; and artful dressed,
Amusive, draws the superstitious train.
Mark how the palace lifts a lying front,
Concealing often, in magnific jail,
Proud want; a deep unanimated gloom!
And oft adjoining to the drear abode
Of misery, whose melancholy walls
Seem its voracious grandeur to reproach.
Within the city bounds the desert see;
See the rank vine o'er subterranean roofs,
Indecent, spread; beneath whose fretted gold
It once, exulting, flowed. The people mark,
Matchless, while fired by me; to public good
Inexorably firm, just, generous, brave,
Afraid of nothing but unworthy life,
Elate with glory, an heroic soul
Known to the vulgar breast: behold them now
A thin despairing number, all-subdued,
The slaves of slaves, by superstition fooled,
By vice unmanned and a licentious rule;
In guile ingenious, and in murder brave.
Such in one land, beneath the same fair clime,
Thy sons, Oppression, are; and such were mine.
" Even with thy laboured pomp, for whose vain show

Deluded thousands starve; all age-begrimed,
Torn, robbed, and scattered in unnumbered sacks,*
And by the tempest of two thousand years
Continual shaken, let my ruins vie.
These roads that yet the Roman hand assert,
Beyond the weak repair of modern toil;
These fractured arches, that the chiding stream
No more delighted hear; these rich remains
Of marbles now unknown, where shines imbibed
Each parent ray; these massy columns, hewed
From Afric's farthest shore; one granite all,
These obelisks high-towering to the sky,
Mysterious marked with dark Egyptian lore;
These endless wonders that this sacred way†
Illumine still, and consecrate to fame;
These fountains, vases, urns, and statues, charged
With the fine stores of art-completing Greece.
Mine is, besides, thy every later boast:
Thy Buonarotis, thy Palladios mine;
And mine the fair designs, which Raphael's‡ soul
O'er the live canvas, emanating, breathed.

"What would you say, ye conquerors of earth!
Ye Romans! could you raise the laurelled head;
Could you the country see, by seas of blood,
And the dread toil of ages, won so dear;
Your pride, your triumph, your supreme delight!
For whose defence oft, in the doubtful hour,
You rushed with rapture down the gulf of fate,

* Alluding to the many occasions when Rome has been sacked by hostile armies.

† Via Sacra.—T.

‡ Michael Angelo Buonaroti, Palladio, and Raphael d'Urbino; the three great modern masters in sculpture, architecture, and painting.—T.

Of death ambitious! till by awful deeds,
Virtues, and courage, that amaze mankind,
The queen of nations rose; possessed of all
Which nature, art, and glory could bestow:
What would you say, deep in the last abyss
Of slavery, vice, and unambitious want,
Thus to behold her sunk? your crowded plains,
Void of their cities; unadorned your hills;
Ungraced your lakes; your ports to ships unknown;
Your lawless floods, and your abandoned streams;
These could you know, these could you love again?
Thy Tibur, Horace, could it now inspire,
Content, poetic ease, and rural joy,
Soon bursting into song: while through the groves
Of headlong Anio, dashing to the vale,
In many a tortured stream, you mused along?
Yon wild retreat,* where superstition dreams,
Could, Tully, you your Tusculum believe?
And could you deem yon naked hills, that form,
Famed in old song, the ship-forsaken bay,†
Your Formian shore? Once the delight of earth,
Where art and nature, ever smiling, joined
On the gay land to lavish all their stores.
How changed, how vacant, Virgil, wide around,
Would now your Naples seem? disastered less
By black Vesuvius thundering o'er the coast
His midnight earthquakes, and his mining fires,
Than by despotic rage,‡ that inward gnaws

* Tusculum is reckoned to have stood at a place now called Grotta Ferrata, a convent of monks.—T.

† The bay of Mola (anciently Formiæ) into which Homer brings Ulysses and his companions. Near Formiæ Cicero had a villa.—T.

‡ Naples, then under the Austrian government.

A native foe; a foreign, tears without.
First from your flattered Cæsars this began:
Till, doomed to tyrants an eternal prey,
Thin peopled spreads, at last, the syren plain,*
That the dire soul of Hannibal disarmed;
And wrapped in weeds the shore† of Venus lies.
There Baiæ sees no more the joyous throng;
Her banks all beaming with the pride of Rome:
No generous vines now bask along the hills,
Where sport the breezes of the Tyrrhene main:
With baths and temples mixed, no villas rise;
Nor, art-sustained amid reluctant waves,
Draw the cool murmurs of the breathing deep:
No spreading ports their sacred arms extend:
No mighty moles the big intrusive storm,
From the calm station, roll resounding back.
An almost total desolation sits,
A dreary stillness, saddening o'er the coast;
Where,‡ when soft suns and tepid winters rose,
Rejoicing crowds inhaled the balm of peace;
Where citied hill to hill reflected blaze;
And where, with Ceres, Bacchus wont to hold
A genial strife. Her youthful form, robust,
Even Nature yields; by fire and earthquake rent:
Whole stately cities in the dark abrupt
Swallowed at once, or vile in rubbish laid,
A nest for serpents; from the red abyss

* Campagna Felice, adjoining to Capua.—T.

† The coast of Baiæ, which was formerly adorned with the works mentioned in the following lines; and where, amidst many magnificent ruins, those of a temple erected to Venus are still to be seen.—T.

‡ All along this coast the ancient Romans had their winter retreats; and several populous cities stood.—T.

New hills, explosive, thrown; the Lucrine lake
A reedy pool: and all to Cuma's point,
The sea recovering his usurped domain,
And poured triumphant o'er the buried dome.
"Hence, Britain, learn; my best established, last,
And more than Greece, or Rome, my steady reign;
The land where, King and People equal bound
By guardian laws, my fullest blessings flow;
And where my jealous unsubmitting soul,
The dread of tyrants! burns in every breast:
Learn hence, if such the miserable fate
Of an heroic race, the masters once
Of humankind; what, when deprived of ME,
How grievous must be thine? in spite of climes,
Whose sun-enlivened ether wakes the soul
To higher powers; in spite of happy soils,
That, but by labour's slightest aid impelled,
With treasures teem to thy cold clime unknown;
If there desponding fail the common arts,
And sustenance of life: could life itself,
Far less a thoughtless tyrant's hollow pomp,
Subsist with thee? against depressing skies,
Joined to full-spread oppression's cloudy brow,
How could thy spirits hold? where vigour find,
Forced fruits to tear from their unnative soil?
Or, storing every harvest in thy ports,
To plough the dreadful all-producing wave?"
Here paused the Goddess. By the pause assured,
In trembling accents thus I moved my prayer;
"Oh first, and most benevolent of powers!
Come from eternal splendours, here on earth,
Against despotic pride, and rage, and lust,
To shield mankind; to raise them to assert

The native rights and honour of their race:
Teach me, thy lowest subject, but in zeal
Yielding to none, the progress of thy reign,
And with a strain from THEE enrich the Muse.
As thee alone she serves, her patron, THOU,
And great inspirer be! then will she joy,
Though narrow life her lot, and private shade:
And when her venal voice she barters vile,
Or to thy open or thy secret foes;
May ne'er those sacred raptures touch her more,
By slavish hearts unfelt! and may her song
Sink in oblivion with the nameless crew,
Vermin of state, to thy o'erflowing light
That owe their being, yet betray thy cause."
Then, condescending kind, the heavenly Power
Returned:——"What here, suggested by the scene,
I slight unfold, record and sing at home,
In that blest isle, where (so we spirits move)
With one quick effort of my will I am.
There Truth, unlicensed, walks; and dares accost
Even kings themselves, the monarchs of the free!
Fixed on my rock, there, an indulgent race
O'er Britons wield the sceptre of their choice:
And there, to finish what his sires began,
A Prince behold! for me who burns sincere,
Even with a subject's zeal. He my great work
Will parent-like sustain; and, added, give
The touch the Graces and the Muses owe.
For Britain's glory swells his panting breast;
And ancient arts he emulous revolves:
His pride to let the smiling heart abroad,
Through clouds of pomp, that but conceal the man;
To please his pleasure; bounty his delight;

And all the soul of Titus dwells in him."
Hail, glorious theme! but how, alas! shall verse,
From the crude stores of mortal language drawn,
How faint and tedious, sing, what, piercing deep,
The Goddess flashed at once upon my soul.
For, clear precision all, the tongue of gods
Is harmony itself; to every ear
Familiar known, like light to every eye.
Meantime disclosing ages, as she spoke,
In long succession poured their empires forth;
Scene after scene, the human drama spread;
And still the embodied picture rose to sight.
Oh THOU! to whom the Muses owe their flame;
Who bidd'st, beneath the pole, Parnassus rise,
And Hippocrenè flow; with thy bold ease,
The striking force, the lightning of thy thought,
And thy strong phrase, that rolls profound and clear;
Oh, gracious Goddess! reinspire my song;
While I, to nobler than poetic fame
Aspiring, thy commands to Britons bear.

GREECE;

BEING THE SECOND PART OF

LIBERTY,

A POEM.

THE CONTENTS OF

PART II.

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LIBERTY.

PART II.—GREECE.

THUS spoke the Goddess of the fearless eye;
And at her voice, renewed, the Vision rose:
"First, in the dawn of time, with eastern swains,
In woods, and tents, and cottages, I lived;
While on from plain to plain they led their flocks,
In search of clearer spring, and fresher field.
These, as increasing families disclosed
The tender state, I taught an equal sway.
Few were offences, properties, and laws.
Beneath the rural portal, palm-o'erspread,
The father senate met. There Justice dealt,
With reason then and equity the same,
Free as the common air, her prompt decree;
Nor yet had stained her sword with subjects' blood.
The simpler arts were all their simple wants
Had urged to light. But instant, these supplied,
Another set of fonder wants arose,
And other arts with them of finer aim;
Till, from refining want to want impelled,

The mind by thinking pushed her latent powers,
And life began to glow, and arts to shine.
" At first, on brutes alone the rustic war
Launched the rude spear; swift, as he glared along,
On the grim lion, or the robber wolf.
For then young sportive life was void of toil,
Demanding little, and with little pleased:
But when to manhood grown, and endless joys,
Led on by equal toils, the bosom fired;
Lewd lazy rapine broke primeval peace,
And, hid in caves and idle forests drear,
From the lone pilgrim, and the wandering swain,
Seized what he durst not earn. Then brother's blood
First, horrid, smoked on the polluted skies.
Awful in justice, then the burning youth,
Led by their tempered sires, on lawless men,
The last worst monsters of the shaggy wood,
Turned the keen arrow, and the sharpened spear.
Then war grew glorious. Heroes then arose;
Who, scorning coward self, for others lived,
Toiled for their ease, and for their safety bled.
West, with the living day, to Greece I came:
Earth smiled beneath my beam: the Muse before
Sonorous flew, that low till then in woods
Had tuned the reed, and sighed the shepherd's pain;
But now, to sing heroic deeds, she swelled
A nobler note, and bade the banquet burn.
" For Greece my sons of Egypt I forsook;
A boastful race, that in the vain abyss
Of fabling ages loved to lose their source,
And with their river traced it from the skies.
While there my laws alone despotic reigned,

And king, as well as people, proud obeyed;
I taught them science, virtue, wisdom, arts;
By poets, sages, legislators sought;
The school of polished life, and human kind.
But when mysterious Superstition came,
And, with her Civil Sister* leagued, involved
In studied darkness the desponding mind;
Then Tyrant Power the righteous scourge unloosed:
For yielded reason speaks the soul a slave.
Instead of useful works, like nature's, great,
Enormous cruel wonders crushed the land;
And round a tyrant's tomb,† who none deserved,
For one vile carcass perished countless lives.
Then the great Dragon‡ couched amid his floods,
Swelled his fierce heart, and cried, 'This flood is mine,
'Tis I that bid it flow.' But, undeceived,
His frenzy soon the proud blasphemer felt;
Felt that, without my fertilizing power,
Suns lost their force, and Niles o'erflowed in vain.
Nought could retard me: nor the frugal state
Of rising Persia, sober in extreme,
Beyond the pitch of man, and thence reversed
Into luxurious waste: nor yet the ports
Of old Phœnicia; first for *letters famed,*
That paint the voice, and *silent speak to sight;*
Of arts prime source, and *guardian! by fair stars,*
First tempted out *into the lonely deep;*
To whom I first disclosed *mechanic arts,*
The winds to conquer, to subdue the waves,
With all the peaceful power of ruling trade;

* Civil Tyranny.—T. † The Pyramids.—T.
‡ An eastern metaphor used in Scripture to express an Egyptian Tyrant.—T.

Earnest of Britain. Nor by these retained;
Nor by the neighbouring land, whose palmy shore
The silver Jordan laves. Before me lay
The promised Land of Arts, and urged my flight.
"Hail, Nature's utmost boast! unrivalled Greece!
My fairest reign! where every power benign
Conspired to blow the flower of human kind,
And lavished all that genius can inspire.
Clear sunny climates, by the breezy main,
Iönian or Ægean, tempered kind:
Light, airy soils: a country rich, and gay;
Broke into hills with balmy odours crowned,
And, bright with purple harvest, joyous vales;
Mountains, and streams, where verse spontaneous flowed;
Whence deemed by wondering men the seat of gods,
And still the mountains and the streams of song.
All that boon Nature could luxuriant pour
Of high materials, and my restless arts
Frame into finished life. How many states,
And clustering towns, and monuments of fame,
And scenes of glorious deeds, in little bounds;
From the rough tract of bending mountains, beat
By Adria's here, there by Ægean waves;
To where the deep-adorning Cyclade Isles
In shining prospect rise, and on the shore
Of farthest Crete resounds the Libyan main!
"O'er all two rival cities reared the brow,
And balanced all. Spread on Eurotas' bank,
Amid a circle of soft rising hills,
The patient Sparta one: the sober, hard,
And man-subduing city; which no shape

Of pain could conquer, nor of pleasure charm.
Lycurgus there built, on the solid base
Of equal life, so well a tempered state;
Where mixed each government, in such just poise;
Each power so checking, and supporting each;
That firm for ages, and unmoved, it stood,
The fort of Greece! without one giddy hour,
One shock of faction, or of party rage.
For, drained the springs of wealth, Corruption there
Lay withered at the root. Thrice happy land!
Had not neglected art, with weedy vice
Confounded, sunk. But if Athenian arts
Loved not the soil; yet there the calm abode
Of wisdom, virtue, philosophic ease,
Of manly sense and wit, in frugal phrase
Confined, and pressed into Laconic force.
There too, by rooting thence still treacherous self,
The Public and the Private grew the same.
The children of the nursing Public all,
And at its table fed; for that they toiled,
For that they lived entire, and even for that
The tender mother urged her son to die.
"Of softer genius, but not less intent
To seize the palm of empire, Athens strove.
Where, with bright marbles big and future pomp,
Hymettus* spread, amid the scented sky,
His thymy treasures to the labouring bee,
And to botanic hand the stores of health;
Wrapt in a soul-attenuating clime,
Between Ilissus and Cephissus† glowed

* A mountain near Athens.—T.
† Two rivers, betwixt which Athens was situated.—T.

This hive of science, shedding sweets divine,
Of active arts, and animated arms.
There, passionate for me, an easy-moved,
A quick, refined, a delicate, humane,
Enlightened people reigned. Oft on the brink
Of ruin, hurried by the charm of speech,
Enforcing hasty counsel immature,
Tottered the rash Democracy; unpoised,
And by the rage devoured, that ever tears
A populace unequal; part too rich,
And part or fierce with want, or abject grown.
Solon at last, their mild restorer, rose:
Allayed the tempest; to the calm of laws
Reduced the settling whole; and, with the weight
Which the two senates* to the public lent,
As with an anchor fixed the driving state.
"Nor was my forming care to these confined.
For emulation through the whole I poured,
Noble contention! who should most excel
In government well poised, adjusted best
To public weal: in countries cultured high:
In ornamented towns, where order reigns,
Free social life, and polished manners fair:
In exercise, and arms; arms only drawn
For common Greece, to quell the Persian pride:
In moral science, and in graceful arts.
Hence, as for glory peacefully they strove,
The prize grew greater, and the prize of all.

* The Areopagus, or Supreme Court of Judicature, which Solon reformed and improved: and the council of Four Hundred, by him instituted. In this council all affairs of state were deliberated, before they came to be voted in the assembly of the people.—T.

By contest brightened, hence the radiant youth,
Poured every beam; by generous pride inflamed,
Felt every ardour burn: their great reward
The verdant wreath, which sounding Pisa* gave.
"Hence flourished Greece; and hence a race of [men,
As gods by conscious future times adored;
In whom each virtue wore a smiling air,
Each science shed o'er life a friendly light,
Each art was nature. Spartan valour hence,
At the famed pass,† firm as an isthmus stood;
And the whole eastern ocean, waving far
As eye could dart its vision, nobly checked.
While in extended battle, at the field
Of Marathon, my keen Athenians drove
Before their ardent band an host of slaves.
"Hence through the continent ten thousand Greeks
Urged a retreat, whose glory not the prime
Of victories can reach. Deserts, in vain,
Opposed their course; and hostile lands, unknown;
And deep rapacious floods, dire banked with death;
And mountains, in whose jaws destruction grinned;
Hunger, and toil; Armenian snows, and storms;
And circling myriads still of barbarous foes.
Greece in their view, and glory yet untouched,
Their steady column pierced the scattering herds,
Which a whole empire poured; and held its way
Triumphant, by the sage-exalted Chief‡
Fired and sustained. Oh light and force of mind,

* Or Olympia, the city where the Olympic games were celebrated.—T.

† The Straits of Thermopylæ.—T.

‡ Xenophon.—T.

Almost almighty in severe extremes!
The sea at last from Colchian mountains seen,
Kind-hearted transport round their captains threw
The soldiers' fond embrace; o'erflowed their eyes
With tender floods, and loosed the general voice
To cries resounding loud—'The sea! The sea!'

"In Attic bounds hence heroes, sages, wits,
Shone thick as stars, the milky way of Greece!
And though gay wit and pleasing grace was theirs,
All the soft modes of elegance and ease;
Yet was not courage less, the patient touch
Of toiling art, and disquisition deep.

"My spirit pours a vigour through the soul,
The unfettered thought with energy inspires,
Invincible in arts, in the bright field
Of nobler science, as in that of arms.
Athenians thus not less intrepid burst
The bonds of tyrant darkness, than they spurned
The Persian chains: while through the city, full
Of mirthful quarrel and of witty war,
Incessant struggled taste, refining taste,
And friendly free discussion, calling forth
From the fair jewel, Truth, its latent ray.
O'er all shone out the great Athenian Sage,*
And Father of Philosophy: the sun,
From whose white blaze emerged, each various sect
Took various tints, but with diminished beam.
Tutor of Athens! he, in every street,
Dealt priceless treasure: goodness his delight,
Wisdom his wealth, and glory his reward.
Deep through the human heart, with playful art,
His simple question stole; as into truth,

* Socrates.—T.

And serious deeds, he smile the laughing race;
Taught moral happy life, whate'er can bless,
Or grace mankind; and what he taught he was.
Compounded high, though plain, his doctrine broke
In different Schools: the bold poetic phrase
Of figured Plato; Xenophon's pure strain,
Like the clear brook that steals along the vale;
Dissecting truth, the Stagyrite's* keen eye;
The exalted Stoic pride; the Cynic sneer;
The slow-consenting Academic doubt;
And, joining bliss to virtue, the glad ease
Of Epicurus, seldom understood.
They, ever candid, reason still opposed
To reason; and, since virtue was their aim,
Each by sure practice tried to prove his way
The best. Then stood untouched the solid base
Of Liberty, the liberty of mind:
For systems yet, and soul-enslaving creeds,
Slept with the monsters of succeeding times.
From priestly darkness sprung the enlightening arts
Of fire, and sword, and rage, and horrid names.

"O Greece! thou sapient nurse of finer arts!
Which to bright Science blooming Fancy bore;
Be this thy praise, that thou, and thou alone,
In these hast led the way, in these excelled,
Crowned with the laurel of assenting Time.

"In thy full language, speaking mighty things;
Like a clear torrent close, or else diffused
A broad majestic stream, and rolling on
Through all the winding harmony of sound:
In it the power of eloquence, at large,
Breathed the persuasive or pathetic soul;

* Aristotle.

Stilled by degrees the democratic storm,
Or bade it threatening rise, and tyrants shook,
Flushed at the head of their victorious troops.
In it the Muse, her fury never quenched,
By mean unyielding phrase, or jarring sound,
Her unconfined divinity displayed;
And, still harmonious, formed it to her will:
Or soft depressed it to the shepherd's moan,
Or raised it swelling to the tongue of gods.
" Heroic song was thine; the Fountain Bard,*
Whence each poetic stream derives its course.
Thine the dread moral scene, thy chief delight!
Where idle Fancy durst not mix her voice,
When Reason spoke august; the fervent heart
Or plained, or stormed; and in the impassioned man,
Concealing art with art, the poet sunk.
This potent school of manners, but when left
To loose neglect, a land-corrupting plague,
Was not unworthy deemed of public care,
And boundless cost, by thee; whose every son,
Even last mechanic, the true taste possessed
Of what had flavour to the nourished soul.
" The sweet enforcer of the poet's strain,
Thine was the meaning music of the heart.
Not the vain trill, that, void of passion, runs
In giddy mazes, tickling idle ears;
But that deep-searching voice, and artful hand,
To which respondent shakes the varied soul.
" Thy fair ideas, thy delightful forms,
By Love imagined, and the Graces touched,
The boast of well pleased Nature! Sculpture seized,

* Homer.—T.

And bade them ever smile in Parian stone.
Selecting Beauty's choice, and that again
Exalting, blending in a perfect whole,
Thy workmen left even Nature's self behind.
From those far different, whose prolific hand
Peoples a nation: they for years on years,
By the cool touches of judicious toil,
Their rapid genius curbing, poured it all
Through the live features of one breathing stone.
There, beaming full, it shone; expressing gods;
Jove's awful brow, Apollo's air divine,
The fierce atrocious frown of sinewed Mars,
Or the sly graces of the Cyprian Queen.
Minutely perfect all! Each dimple sunk,
And every muscle swelled, as nature taught.
In tresses, braided gay, the marble waved;
Flowed in loose robes, or thin transparent veils;
Sprung into motion; softened into flesh;
Was fired to passion, or refined to soul.

"Nor less thy pencil, with creative touch,
Shed mimic life, when all thy brightest dames,
Assembled, Zeuxis in his Helen mixed.
And when Apelles, who peculiar knew
To give a grace that more than mortal smiled,
The soul of beauty! called the Queen of Love,
Fresh from the billows, blushing orient charms.
Even such enchantment then thy pencil poured,
That cruel-thoughted War the impatient torch
Dashed to the ground; and, rather than destroy
The patriot picture,* let the city 'scape.

* When Demetrius besieged Rhodes, and could have reduced the city, by setting fire to that quarter of it where stood the house of the celebrated Protogenes; he chose rather

" First, elder Sculpture taught her sister art
Correct design; where great ideas shone,
And in the secret trace expression spoke:
Taught her the graceful attitude; the turn,
And beauteous airs of head; the native act,
Or bold, or easy; and, cast free behind,
The swelling mantle's well adjusted flow.
Then the bright Muse, their eldest sister, came;
And bade her follow where she led the way:
Bade earth, and sea, and air, in colours rise;
And copious action on the canvas glow:
Gave her gay Fable; spread Invention's store;
Enlarged her view; taught composition high,
And just arrangement, circling round one point,
That starts to sight, binds and commands the whole.
Caught from the heavenly Muse a nobler aim,
And scorning the soft trade of mere delight,
O'er all thy temples, porticos, and schools,
Heroic deeds she traced, and warm displayed
Each moral beauty to the ravished eye.
There, as the imagined presence of the god
Aroused the mind, or vacant hours induced
Calm contemplation, or assembled youth
Burned in ambitious circle round the sage,
The living lesson stole into the heart,
With more prevailing force than dwells in words.
These rouse to glory; while, to rural life,
The softer canvas oft reposed the soul.
There gaily broke the sun-illumined cloud;
The lessening prospect, and the mountain blue,
Vanished in air; the precipice frowned, dire;

to raise the siege, than hazard the burning of a famous picture called Jasylus, the masterpiece of that painter.—T.

White, down the rock, the rushing torrent dashed;
The sun shone, trembling, o'er the distant main;
The tempest foamed, immense; the driving storm
Saddened the skies, and, from the doubling gloom,
On the scathed oak the ragged lightning fell;
In closing shades, and where the current strays,
With Peace, and Love, and Innocence around,
Piped the lone shepherd to his feeding flock:
Round happy parents smiled their younger selves;
And friends conversed, by death divided long.

"To public virtue thus the smiling arts,
Unblemished handmaids, served; the Graces they
To dress this fairest Venus. Thus revered,
And placed beyond the reach of sordid care,
The high awarders of immortal fame,
Alone for glory thy great masters strove;
Courted by kings, and by contending states
Assumed the boasted honour of their birth.

"In Architecture too thy rank supreme!
That art where most magnificent appears
The little builder man; by thee refined,
And, smiling high, to full perfection brought.
Such thy sure rules, that Goths of every age,
Who scorned their aid, have only loaded earth
With laboured heavy monuments of shame.
Not those gay domes that o'er thy splendid shore
Shot, all proportion, up. First unadorned,
And nobly plain, the manly Doric rose;
The Ionic then, with decent matron grace,
Her airy pillar heaved; luxuriant last,
The rich Corinthian spread her wanton wreath.
The whole so measured true, so lessened off
By fine proportion, that the marble pile,

Formed to repel the still or stormy waste
Of rolling ages, light as fabrics looked
That from the magic wand aërial rise.
"These were the wonders that illumined Greece,
From end to end"——Here interrupting warm,
"Where are they now? (I cried) say, goddess, where?
And what the land, thy darling thus of old?"
"Sunk! (she resumed) deep in the kindred gloom
Of superstition, and of slavery, sunk!
No glory now can touch their hearts, benumbed
By loose dejected sloth and servile fear:
No science pierce the darkness of their minds;
No nobler art the quick ambitious soul
Of imitation in their breast awake.
Even to supply the needful arts of life,
Mechanic toil denies the hopeless hand.
Scarce any trace remaining, vestige grey,
Or nodding column on the desert shore,
To point where Corinth, or where Athens stood.
A faithless land of violence, and death!
Where commerce parleys, dubious, on the shore;
And his wild impulse curious search restrains,
Afraid to trust the inhospitable clime.
Neglected nature fails; in sordid want
Sunk, and debased their beauty beams no more.
The sun himself seems, angry, to regard,
Of light unworthy, the degenerate race;
And fires them oft with pestilential rays:
While earth, blue poison steaming on the skies,
Indignant, shakes them from her troubled sides.
But as from man to man, Fate's first decree,
Impartial Death the tide of riches rolls,

So states must die and Liberty go round.
"Fierce was the stand, ere Virtue, Valour, Arts,
And the soul fired by me (that often, stung
With thoughts of better times and old renown,
From hydra-tyrants tried to clear the land)
Lay quite extinct in Greece, their works effaced,
And gross o'er all unfeeling bondage spread.
Sooner I moved my much reluctant flight,
Poised on the doubtful wing: when Greece with Greece
Embroiled in foul contention fought no more
For common glory, and for common weal:
But false to Freedom, sought to quell the free;
Broke the firm band of Peace, and sacred Love,
That lent the whole irrefragable force;
And, as around the partial trophy blushed,
Prepared the way for total overthrow.
Then to the Persian power, whose pride they scorned,
When Xerxes poured his millions o'er the land,
Sparta, by turns, and Athens, vilely sued;
Sued to be venal parricides, to spill
Their country's bravest blood, and on themselves
To turn their matchless mercenary arms.
Peaceful in Susa, then, sat the Great King;*
And by the trick of treaties, the still waste
Of sly corruption, and barbaric gold,
Effected what his steel could ne'er perform.
Profuse he gave them the luxurious draught,
Inflaming all the land: unbalanced wide
Their tottering states; their wild assemblies ruled,
As the winds turn at every blast the seas:

* So the kings of Persia were called by the Greeks.—T.

And by their listed orators, whose breath
Still with a factious storm infested Greece,
Roused them to civil war, or dashed them down
To sordid peace—Peace!* that, when Sparta shook
Astonished Artaxerxes on his throne,
Gave up, fair-spread o'er Asia's sunny shore,
Their kindred cities to perpetual chains.
What could so base, so infamous a thought
In Spartan hearts inspire? Jealous, they saw
Respiring Athens† rear again her walls:
And the pale fury fired them, once again
To crush this rival city to the dust.
For now no more the noble social soul
Of Liberty my families combined;
But by short views, and selfish passions, broke,
Dire as when friends are rankled into foes,
They mixed severe, and waged eternal war:
Nor felt they, furious, their exhausted force;
Nor, with false glory, discord, madness blind,
Saw how the blackening storm from Thracia came.
Long years rolled on, by many a battle stained,‡
The blush and boast of Fame! where courage, art,
And military glory shone supreme:
But let detesting ages, from the scene
Of Greece self-mangled, turn the sickening eye.
At last, when bleeding from a thousand wounds,

* The peace made by Antalcidas, the Lacedemonian admiral, with the Persians; by which the Lacedemonians abandoned all the Greeks established in the lesser Asia, to the dominion of the King of Persia.—T.

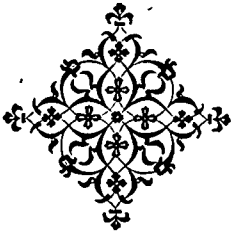
† Athens had been dismantled by the Lacedemonians, at the end of the first Peloponnesian war, and was at this time restored by Conon to its former splendour.—T.

‡ The Peloponnesian war.—T.

She felt her spirits fail; and in the dust
Her latest heroes, Nicias, Conon, lay,
Agesilaus, and the Theban friends:*
The Macedonian vulture marked his time,
By the dire scent of Cheronæa† lured,
And, fierce descending, seized his hapless prey.
"Thus tame submitted to the victor's yoke
Greece, once the gay, the turbulent, the bold;
For every grace, and muse, and science born;
With arts of war, of government elate;
To tyrants dreadful, dreadful to the best;
Whom I myself could scarcely rule: and thus
The Persian fetters, that enthralled the mind,
Were turned to formal and apparent chains.
"Unless corruption first deject the pride,
And guardian vigour of the free-born soul,
All crude attempts of violence are vain;
For firm within, and while at heart untouched,
Ne'er yet by force was freedom overcome.
But soon as independence stoops the head,
To vice enslaved, and vice-created wants;
Then to some foul corrupting hand, whose waste
These heightened wants with fatal bounty feeds:
From man to man the slackening ruin runs,
Till the whole state unnerved in slavery sinks."

* Pelopidas and Epaminondas.—T.

† The battle of Cheronæa, in which Philip of Macedon utterly defeated the Greeks.—T.



ROME;

BEING THE THIRD PART OF

LIBERTY,

A POEM.

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LIBERTY.

PART III.—ROME.

HERE, melting, mixed with air the ideal forms
That painted still whate'er the goddess sung.
Then I, impatient.—"From extinguished Greece,
To what new region streamed the Human Day?"
She softly sighing, as when Zephyr leaves,
Resigned to Boreas, the declining year,
Resumed.—"Indignant, these last scenes I fled;*
And long ere then, Leucadia's cloudy cliff,
And the Ceraunian hills behind me thrown,
All Latium stood aroused. Ages before,
Great mother of republics! Greece had poured,
Swarm after swarm, her ardent youth around.
On Asia, Afric, Sicily, they stooped,
But chief on fair Hesperia's winding shore;
Where, from Lacinium† to Etrurian vales,
They rolled increasing colonies along,
And lent materials for my Roman reign.

* The last struggles of Liberty in Greece.—T.
† A promontory in Calabria.—T.

With them my spirit spread; and numerous states,
And cities rose, on Grecian models formed;
As its parental policy and arts
Each had imbibed. Besides, to each assigned,
A guardian Genius o'er the public weal,
Kept an unclosing eye; tried to sustain,
Or more sublime, the soul infused by me:
And strong the battle rose, with various wave,
Against the tyrant demons of the land.
Thus they their little wars and triumphs knew;
Their flows of fortune, and receding times,
But almost all below the proud regard
Of story vowed to Rome, on deeds intent
That Truth beyond the flight of Fable bore.
"Not so the Samian sage;* to him belongs
The brightest witness of recording Fame.
For these free states his native isle† forsook,
And a vain tyrant's transitory smile,
He sought Crotona's pure salubrious air;
And through Great Greece‡ his gentle wisdom taught;
Wisdom that calmed for listening years§ the mind,
Nor ever heard amid the storm of zeal.
His mental eye first launched into the deeps
Of boundless ether; where unnumbered orbs,
Myriads on myriads, through the pathless sky
Unerring roll, and wind their steady way.
There he the full consenting choir beheld;

* Pythagoras.—T.

† Samos, over which then reigned the tyrant Polycrates.—T.

‡ The southern parts of Italy and Sicily, so called because of the Grecian colonies there settled.—T.

§ His scholars were enjoined silence for five years.—T.

There first discerned the secret band of love,
The kind attraction, that to central suns
Binds circling earths, and world with world unites.
Instructed thence, he great ideas formed
Of the whole-moving, all-informing God,
The Sun of beings! beaming unconfined
Light, life, and love, and ever active power:
Whom nought can image, and who best approves
The silent worship of the moral heart,
That joys in bounteous Heaven, and spreads the joy.
Nor scorned the soaring sage to stoop to life,
And bound his reason to the sphere of man.
He gave the four yet reigning virtues* name;
Inspired the study of the finer arts,
That civilize mankind, and laws devised
Where with enlightened justice mercy mixed.
He even, into his tender system, took
Whatever shares the brotherhood of life:
He taught that life's indissoluble flame,
From brute to man, and man to brute again,
For ever shifting, runs the eternal round;
Thence tried against the blood-polluted meal,
And limbs yet quivering with some kindred soul,
To turn the human heart. Delightful truth!
Had he beheld the living chain ascend,
And not a circling form, but rising whole.

"Amid these small republics one arose
On yellow Tiber's bank, almighty Rome,
Fated for me. A nobler spirit warmed
Her sons; and, roused by tyrants, nobler still
It burned in Brutus; the proud Tarquins chased,

* The four cardinal virtues.—T.

With all their crimes; bade radiant eras rise,
And the long honours of the Consul-line.
"Here from the fairer, not the greater, plan
Of Greece I varied; whose unmixing states,
By the keen soul of emulation pierced,
Long waged alone the bloodless war of arts,
And their best empire gained. But to diffuse
O'er men an empire was my purpose now:
To let my martial majesty abroad;
Into the vortex of one state to draw
The whole mixed force, and liberty, on earth;
To conquer tyrants, and set nations free.
"Already have I given, with flying touch,
A broken view of this my amplest reign.
Now, while its first, last, periods you survey,
Mark how it labouring rose, and rapid fell.
"When Rome in noon-tide empire grasped the world,
And, soon as her resistless legions shone,
The nations stooped around; though then appeared
Her grandeur most; yet in her dawn of power,
By many a jealous equal people pressed,
Then was the toil, the mighty struggle then;
Then for each Roman I a hero told;
And every passing sun, and Latian scene,
Saw patriot virtues then, and awful deeds,
That or surpass the faith of modern times,
Or, if believed, with sacred horror strike.
"For then, to prove my most exalted power,
I to the point of full perfection pushed,
To fondness and enthusiastic zeal,
The great, the reigning passion of the free.
That godlike passion! which, the bounds of self
Divinely bursting, the whole public takes

Into the heart, enlarged, and burning high
With the mixed ardour of unnumbered selves;
Of all who safe beneath the voted laws
Of the same parent state, fraternal, live.
From this kind sun of moral nature flowed
Virtues, that shine the light of humankind,
And, rayed through story, warm remotest time.
These virtues too, reflected to their source,
Increased its flame. The social charm went round,
The fair idea, more attractive still,
As more by virtue marked; till Romans, all
One band of friends, unconquerable grew. [voice,
"Hence, when their country raised her plaintive
The voice of pleading Nature was not heard;
And in their hearts the fathers throbbed no more;
Stern to themselves, but gentle to the whole.
Hence sweetened Pain, the luxury of toil;
Patience, that baffled Fortune's utmost rage;
High-minded Hope, which at the lowest ebb,
When Brennus conquered, and when Cannæ bled,
The bravest impulse felt, and scorned despair.
Hence Moderation a new conquest gained:
As on the vanquished, like descending heaven,
Their dewy mercy dropped, their bounty beamed,
And by the labouring hand were crowns bestowed.
Fruitful of men, hence hard laborious life,
Which no fatigue can quell, no season pierce.
Hence, Independence, with his little pleased,
Serene, and self-sufficient, like a god;
In whom corruption could not lodge one charm,
While he his honest roots to gold preferred;
While truly rich, and by his Sabine field,
The man maintained, the Roman's splendour all

Was in the public wealth and glory placed:
Or ready, a rough swain, to guide the plough;
Or else, the purple o'er his shoulder thrown,
In long majestic flow, to rule the state,
With Wisdom's purest eye; or, clad in steel,
To drive the steady battle on the foe.
Hence every passion, even the proudest, stooped
To common good: Camillus, thy revenge;
Thy glory, Fabius. All submissive hence,
Consuls, Dictators, still resigned their rule,
The very moment that the laws ordained.
Though Conquest o'er them clapped her eagle wings,
Her laurels wreathed, and yoked her snowy steeds
To the triumphal car; soon as expired
The latest hour of sway, taught to submit,
(A harder lesson that than to command)
Into the private Roman sunk the chief.
If Rome was served, and glorious, careless they
By whom. Their country's fame they deemed their own;
And above envy, in a rival's train,
Sung the loud Iös by themselves deserved.
Hence matchless courage. On Cremera's bank,
Hence fell the Fabii; hence the Decii died;
And Curtius plunged into the flaming gulf.
Hence Regulus the wavering fathers firmed,
By dreadful counsel never given before;
For Roman honour sued, and his own doom.
Hence he sustained to dare a death prepared
By Punic rage. On earth his manly look
Relentless fixed, he from a last embrace,
By chains polluted, put his wife aside,

His little children climbing for a kiss;
Then dumb through rows of weeping, wondering
A new illustrious exile! pressed along. [friends,
Nor less impatient did he pierce the crowds
Opposing his return, than if, escaped
From long litigious suits, he glad forsook
The noisy town a while and city cloud,
To breathe Venafrian, or Tarentine air.
Need I these high particulars recount?
The meanest bosom felt a thirst for fame;
Flight their worst death, and shame their only fear.
Life had no charms, nor any terrors fate,
When Rome and glory called. But, in one view,
Mark the rare boast of these unequalled times.
Ages revolved unsullied by a crime:
Astrea* reigned, and scarcely needed laws
To bind a race elated with the pride
Of virtue, and disdaining to descend
To meanness, mutual violence, and wrongs.
While war around them raged, in happy Rome
All peaceful smiled, all save the passing clouds
That often hang on Freedom's jealous brow;
And fair unblemished centuries elapsed,
When not a Roman bled but in the field.
Their virtue such, that an unbalanced state,
Still between Noble and Plebeian tossed,
As flowed the wave of fluctuating power,
By that kept firm, and with triumphant prow
Rode out the storms. Oft though the native feuds,
That from the first their constitution shook,
(A latent ruin, growing as it grew,)
Stood on the threatening point of civil war

* The goddess of Justice.

Ready to rush: yet could the lenient voice
Of wisdom, soothing the tumultuous soul,
These sons of virtue calm. Their generous hearts
Unpetrified by self, so naked lay
And sensible to truth, that o'er the rage
Of giddy faction, by oppression swelled,
Prevailed a simple fable,* and at once
To peace recovered the divided state.
But if their often cheated hopes refused
The soothing touch; still, in the love of Rome,
The dread Dictator found a sure resource.
Was she assaulted? was her glory stained?
One common quarrel wide inflamed the whole.
Foes in the forum, in the field were friends,
By social danger bound; each fond for each,
And for their dearest country all, to die.

"Thus up the hill of empire slow they toiled:
Till, the bold summit gained, the thousand states
Of proud Italia blended into one;
Then o'er the nations they resistless rushed,
And touched the limits of the failing world.

"Let Fancy's eye the distant lines unite.
See that which borders wild the western main,
Where storms at large resound, and tides immense;
From Caledonia's dim cerulean coast,
And moist Hibernia, to where Atlas, lodged
Amid the restless clouds and leaning heaven,
Hangs o'er the deep that borrows thence its name.†
Mark that opposed, where first the springing morn
Her roses sheds, and shakes around her dews:

* The fable of the belly and the members, so finely told us by Livy as having been related by Menenius Agrippa to the refractory Roman people.

† The Atlantic Ocean.

From the dire deserts by the Caspian laved,
To where the Tigris and Euphrates, joined,
Impetuous tear the Babylonian plain;
And blest Arabia aromatic breathes.
See that dividing far the watery north,
Parent of floods! from the majestic Rhine,
Drunk by Batavian meads, to where, seven-mouthed,
In Euxine waves the flashing Danube roars;
To where the frozen Tanais* scarcely stirs
The dead Mæotic pool,† or the long Rha,‡
In the black Scythian sea,§ his torrent throws.
Last, that beneath the burning zone behold:
See where it runs, from the deep-loaded plains
Of Mauritania to the Libyan sands,
Where Ammon lifts amid the torrid waste
A verdant isle,‖ with shade and fountain fresh;
And farther to the full Egyptian shore,
To where the Nile from Ethiopian clouds,
His never drained ethereal urn, descends.
In this vast space what various tongues, and states!
What bounding rocks, and mountains, floods, and seas!
What purple tyrants quelled, and nations freed!
"O'er Greece, descended chief, with stealth divine,
The Roman bounty in a flood of day:
As at her Isthmian games, a fading pomp!
Her full-assembled youth innumerous swarmed.
On a tribunal raised, Flaminius sat:
A victor he, from the deep phalanx pierced

* The river Don.
† A large lake near the Black Sea.
‡ The ancient name of the Volga.—T.
§ The Caspian Sea.—T.
‖ The great Oasis in which was the celebrated temple of Jupiter Ammon.

Of iron-coated Macedon, and back
The Grecian tyrant* to his bounds repelled.
In the high thoughtless gaiety of game,
While sport alone their unambitious hearts
Possessed; the sudden trumpet, sounding hoarse
Bade silence o'er the bright assembly reign.
Then thus a herald:—'To the states of Greece
The Roman people, unconfined, restore
Their countries, cities, liberties, and laws:
Taxes remit, and garrisons withdraw.'
The crowd astonished half, and half informed,
Stared dubious round; some questioned, some exclaimed.
(Like one who dreaming, between hope and fear,
Is lost in anxious joy,) 'Be that again,
Be that again proclaimed, distinct, and loud.'
Loud, and distinct, it was again proclaimed;
And still as midnight in the rural shade,
When the gale slumbers, they the words devoured.
A while severe amazement held them mute,
Then bursting broad, the boundless shout to Heaven
From many a thousand hearts ecstatic sprung.
On every hand rebellowed to their joy
The swelling sea, the rocks, and vocal hills:
Through all her turrets stately Corinth† shook;
And, from the void above of shattered air,
The flitting bird fell breathless to the ground.
What piercing bliss, how keen a sense of fame,
Did then, Flaminius, reach thy inmost soul!
And with what deep-felt glory didst thou then
Escape the fondness of transported Greece!

* The King of Macedonia.—T.
† The Isthmian games were celebrated at Corinth.—T.

Mixed in a tempest of superior joy,
They left the sports; like Bacchanals they flew,
Each other straining in a strict embrace,
Nor strained a slave; and loud acclaims till night
Round the Proconsul's tent repeated rung.
Then, crowned with garlands, came the festive hours;
And music, sparkling wine, and converse warm,
Their raptures waked anew. 'Ye gods!' they cried,
'Ye guardian gods of Greece! and are we free?
Was it not madness deemed the very thought?
And is it true? How did we purchase chains?
At what a dire expense of kindred blood?
And are they now dissolved? And scarce one drop
For the fair first of blessings have we paid?
Courage, and conduct, in the doubtful field,
When rages wide the storm of mingling war,
Are rare indeed; but how to generous ends
To turn success and conquest, rarer still:
That the great gods and Romans only know.
Lives there on earth, almost to Greece unknown,
A people so magnanimous, to quit
Their native soil, traverse the stormy deep,
And by their blood and treasure, spent for us,
Redeem our states, our liberties, and laws!
There does! there does! Oh saviour, Titus! Rome!'
Thus through the happy night they poured their souls,
And in my last reflected beams rejoiced:
As when the shepherd, on the mountain brow,
Sits piping to his flocks and gamesome kids;
Meantime the sun, beneath the green earth sunk,

Slants upward o'er the scene a parting gleam:
Short is the glory that the mountain gilds,
Plays on the glittering flocks, and glads the swain;
To western worlds irrevocable rolled,
Rapid, the source of light recalls his ray."
Here interposing I—"Oh, Queen of men!
Beneath whose sceptre in essential rights
Equal they live; though placed for common good,
Various, or in subjection or command;
And that by common choice: alas! the scene,
With virtue, freedom, and with glory bright,
Streams into blood, and darkens into woe."
Thus she pursued:—"Near this great era, Rome
Began to feel the swift approach of fate,
That now her vitals gained: still more and more
Her deep divisions kindling into rage,
And war with chains and desolation charged.
From an unequal balance of her sons
These fierce contentions sprung: and, as increased
This hated inequality, more fierce
They flamed to tumult. Independence failed;
Here by luxurious wants, by real there;
And with this virtue every virtue sunk,
As, with the sliding rock, the pile sustained.
A last attempt, too late, the Gracchi made,
To fix the flying scale, and poise the state.
On one side swelled aristocratic Pride;
With Usury, the villain, whose fell gripe
Bends by degrees to baseness the free soul;
And Luxury rapacious, cruel, mean,
Mother of vice! While on the other crept
A populace in want, with pleasure fired;
Fit for proscriptions, for the darkest deeds,

As the proud feeder bade; inconstant, blind,
Deserting friends at need, and duped by foes;
Loud and seditious, when a chief inspired
Their headlong fury, but of him deprived,
Already slaves that licked the scourging hand.
"This firm republic, that against the blast
Of opposition rose; that (like an oak,
Nursed on ferocious Algidum,* whose boughs
Still stronger shoot beneath the rigid axe,)
By loss, by slaughter, from the steel itself,
Even force and spirit drew; smit with the calm,
The dead serene of prosperous fortune, pined.
Nought now her weighty legions could oppose;
Her terror† once, on Afric's tawny shore,
Now smoked in dust, a stabling now for wolves;
And every dreaded power received the yoke.
Besides, destructive, from the conquered East,
In the soft plunder came that worst of plagues,
That pestilence of mind, a fevered thirst
For the false joys which Luxury prepares.
Unworthy joys! that wasteful leave behind
No mark of honour, in reflecting hour,
No secret ray to glad the conscious soul;
At once involving in one ruin wealth,
And wealth-acquiring powers: while stupid self,
Of narrow gust, and hebetating sense,
Devour the nobler faculties of bliss.
Hence Roman virtue slackened into sloth;
Security relaxed the softening state;
And the broad eye of government lay closed.
No more the laws inviolable reigned,
And public weal no more: but party raged;

* A town of Latium, near Tusculum. † Carthage.—T.

And partial power, and license unrestrained,
Let Discord through the deathful city loose.
First, mild Tiberius,* on thy sacred head
The fury's vengeance fell; the first, whose blood
Had, since the consuls, stained contending Rome.
Of precedent pernicious! with thee bled
Three hundred Romans; with thy brother, next,
Three thousand more: till, into battles turned
Debates of peace, and forced the trembling laws,
The Forum and Comitia horrid grew,
A scene of bartered power, or reeking gore.
When, half-ashamed, corruption's thievish arts,
And ruffian force begin to sap the mounds
And majesty of laws; if not in time
Repressed severe, for human aid too strong
The torrent turns, and overbears the whole.
"Thus luxury, dissension, a mixed rage
Of boundless pleasure and of boundless wealth,
Want-wishing change, and waste-repairing war,
Rapine for ever lost to peaceful toil,
Guilt unatoned, profuse of blood revenge,
Corruption all avowed, and lawless force,
Each heightening each, alternate shook the state.
Meantime Ambition, at the dazzling head
Of hardy legions, with the laurels heaped
And spoil of nations, in one circling blast
Combined in various storm, and from its base
The broad republic tore. By Virtue built
It touched the skies, and spread o'er sheltered earth
An ample roof: by Virtue too sustained,
And balanced steady, every tempest sung

* Tib. Gracchus.—T.

Innoxious by, or bade it firmer stand.
But when, with sudden and enormous change,
The first of mankind sunk into the last,
As once in virtue, so in vice extreme,
This universal fabric yielded loose,
Before Ambition still; and thundering down,
At last, beneath its ruins crushed a world.
A conquering people, to themselves a prey,
Must ever fall; when their victorious troops,
In blood and rapine savage grown, can find
No land to sack and pillage but their own.
" By brutal Marius, and keen Sylla, first
Effused the deluge dire of civil blood,
Unceasing woes began, and this, or that,
(Deep-drenching their revenge) nor virtue spared,
Nor sex, nor age, nor quality, nor name;
Till Rome, into an human shambles turned,
Made deserts lovely.—Oh, to well-earned chains,
Devoted race!—If no true Roman then,
No Scævola there was, to raise for me
A vengeful hand: was there no father, robbed
Of blooming youth to prop his withered age?
No son, a witness to his hoary sire
In dust and gore defiled? no friend, forlorn?
No wretch that doubtful trembled for himself?
None brave, or wild, to pierce a monster's heart,
Who, heaping horror round, no more deserved
The sacred shelter of the laws he spurned?
No:—Sad o'er all profound dejection sat;
And nerveless fear. The slave's asylum theirs:
Or flight, ill-judging, that the timid back
Turns weak to slaughter; or partaken guilt.
In vain from Sylla's vanity I drew

An unexampled deed. The power resigned,
And all unhoped the commonwealth restored,
Amazed the public, and effaced his crimes.
Through streets yet streaming from his murderous hand
Unarmed he strayed, unguarded, unassailed,
And on the bed of peace his ashes laid;
A grace, which I to his demission gave.
But with him died not the despotic soul.
Ambition saw that stooping Rome could bear
A master, nor had virtue to be free.
Hence, for succeeding years, my troubled reign
No certain peace, no spreading prospect knew.
Destruction gathered round. Still the black soul,
Or of a Cataline, or Rullus,* swelled
With fell designs; and all the watchful art
Of Cicero demanded, all the force,
All the state-wielding magic of his tongue;
And all the thunder of my Cato's zeal.
With these I lingered; till the flame anew
Burst out in blaze immense, and wrapped the world.
The shameful contest sprung; to whom mankind
Should yield the neck: to Pompey, who concealed
A rage impatient of an equal name;
Or to the nobler Cæsar, on whose brow
O'er daring vice deluding virtue smiled,
And who no less a vain superior scorned.

* Publius Servilius Rullus, tribune of the people, proposed an Agrarian Law, in appearance very advantageous for the people, but destructive of their liberty: and which was defeated by the eloquence of Cicero, in his speech against Rullus.—T.

Both bled, but bled in vain. New traitors rose.
The venal will be bought, the base have lords.
To these vile wars I left ambitious slaves;
And from Philippi's field, from where in dust
The last of Romans, matchless Brutus! lay,
Spread to the north untamed a rapid wing.
"What though the first smooth Cæsars arts caressed,
Merit, and virtue, simulating me?
Severely tender! cruelly humane!
The chain to clinch, and make it softer sit
On the new-broken still ferocious state.
From the dark Third,* succeeding, I beheld
The imperial monsters all.—A race on earth
Vindictive sent, the scourge of humankind!
Whose blind profusion drained a bankrupt world;
Whose lust to forming nature seems disgrace;
And whose infernal rage bade every drop
Of ancient blood, that yet retained my flame,
To that of Pætus,† in the peaceful bath,
Or Rome's affrighted streets, inglorious flow.
But almost just the meanly patient death,
That waits a tyrant's unprevented stroke.
Titus indeed gave one short evening gleam;
More cordial felt, as in the midst it spread
Of storm, and horror. The delight of men!
He who the day, when his o'erflowing hand
Had made no happy heart, concluded lost;

* Tiberius.—T.

† Thrasea Pætus, put to death by Nero. Tacitus introduces the account he gives of his death, thus:—"After having inhumanly slaughtered so many illustrious men, he (Nero) burned at last with a desire of cutting off virtue itself in the person of Thrasea," &c.—T.

Trajan and he, with the mild sire* and son,
His son of virtue! eased awhile mankind;
And arts revived beneath their gentle beam.
Then was their last effort: what sculpture raised
To Trajan's glory, following triumphs stole;
And mixed with Gothic forms, (the chisel's shame)
On that triumphal arch,† the forms of Greece.
"Meantime o'er rocky Thrace, and the deep vales
Of gelid Hæmus, I pursued my flight;
And, piercing farthest Scythia, westward swept
Sarmatia,‡ traversed by a thousand streams,
A sullen land of lakes, and fens immense,
Of rocks, resounding torrents, gloomy heaths,
And cruel deserts black with sounding pine;
Where nature frowns: though sometimes into smiles
She softens; and immediate, at the touch
Of southern gales, throws from the sudden glebe
Luxuriant pasture, and a waste of flowers.
But, cold-compressed, when the whole loaded heaven
Descends in snow, lost in one white abrupt,
Lies undistinguished earth; and, seized by frost,
Lakes, headlong streams, and floods, and oceans sleep.
Yet there life glows; the furry millions there

* Antoninus Pius, and his adopted son Marcus Aurelius, afterwards called Antoninus Philosophus.—T.

† Constantine's arch, to build which, that of Trajan was destroyed, sculpture having been then almost entirely lost.—T.

‡ The ancient Sarmatia contained a vast tract of country running all along the north of Europe and Asia.—T.

Deep dig their dens beneath the sheltering snows:
And there a race of men prolific swarms,
To various pain, to little pleasure used;
On whom, keen-parching, beat Riphæan winds;
Hard like their soil, and like their climate fierce,
The nursery of nations!—These I roused,
Drove land on land, on people people poured;
Till from almost perpetual night they broke,
As if in search of day; and o'er the banks
Of yielding empire, only slave-sustained,
Resistless raged; in vengeance urged by me.
"Long in the barbarous heart the buried seeds
Of Freedom lay, for many a wintry age;
And though my spirit worked, by slow degrees,
Nought but its pride and fierceness yet appeared.
Then was the night of time, that parted worlds.
I quitted earth the while. As when the tribes
Aërial, warned of rising winter, ride
Autumnal winds, to warmer climates borne;
So, arts and each good genius in my train,
I cut the closing gloom, and soared to Heaven.
"In the bright regions there of purest day,
Far other scenes, and palaces, arise,
Adorned profuse with other arts divine.
All beauty here below, to them compared,
Would, like a rose before the midday sun,
Shrink up its blossom; like a bubble break
The passing poor magnificence of kings.
For there the King of Nature, in full blaze,
Calls every splendour forth; and there his court,
Amid ethereal powers, and virtues, holds:
Angel, archangel, tutelary gods,
Of cities, nations, empires, and of worlds.

But sacred be the veil, that kindly clouds
A light too keen for mortals; wraps a view
Too softening fair, for those that here in dust
Must cheerful toil out their appointed years.
A sense of higher life would only damp
The schoolboy's task, and spoil his playful hours.
Nor could the child of Reason, feeble man,
With vigour through this infant-being drudge;
Did brighter worlds, their unimagined bliss
Disclosing, dazzle and dissolve his mind."

BRITAIN;

BEING THE FOURTH PART OF

LIBERTY,

A POEM.

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LIBERTY.

PART IV.—BRITAIN.

STRUCK with the rising scene, thus I amazed:
"Ah, Goddess, what a change! is earth the same?
Of the same kind the ruthless race she feeds?
And does the same fair sun and ether spread
Round this vile spot their all-enlivening soul?
Lo! beauty fails; lost in unlovely forms
Of little pomp, magnificence no more
Exalts the mind, and bids the public smile:
While to rapacious interest Glory leaves
Mankind, and every grace of life is gone."
To this the Power, whose vital radiance calls
From the brute mass of man an ordered world:
"Wait till the morning shines, and from the depth
Of Gothic darkness springs another day.
True, Genius droops; the tender ancient taste
Of Beauty, then fresh blooming in her prime,
But faintly trembles through the callous soul;
And Grandeur, or of morals, or of life,
Sinks into safe pursuits, and creeping cares.

Even cautious Virtue seems to stoop her flight,
And aged life to deem the generous deeds
Of youth romantic. Yet in cooler thought
Well reasoned, in researches piercing deep
Through nature's works, in profitable arts,
And all that calm Experience can disclose,
(Slow guide, but sure,) behold the world anew
Exalted rise, with other honours crowned;
And, where my Spirit wakes the finer powers,
Athenian laurels still afresh shall bloom.
"Oblivious ages passed; while earth, forsook
By her best Genii, lay to Demons foul,
And unchained Furies, an abandoned prey.
Contention led the van; first small of size,
But soon dilating to the skies she towers:
Then, wide as air, the livid Fury spread,
And high her head above the stormy clouds,
She blazed in omens, swelled the groaning winds
With wild surmises, battlings, sounds of war:
From land to land the maddening trumpet blew,
And poured her venom through the heart of man.
Shook to the pole, the North obeyed her call.
Forth rushed the bloody power of Gothic war,
War against human kind: Rapine, that led
Millions of raging robbers in his train:
Unlistening, barbarous Force, to whom the sword
Is reason, honour, law: the foe of arts
By monsters followed, hideous to behold,
That claimed their place. Outrageous mixed with these
Another species of tyrannic rule;*
Unknown before, whose cankerous shackles seized

* Church power, or ecclesiastical tyranny.—T.

The envenomed soul; a wilder Fury, she
Even o'er her Elder Sister* tyrannized;
Or, if perchance agreed, inflamed her rage.
Dire was her train, and loud: the sable band,
Thundering;—'Submit, ye Laity! ye profane!
Earth is the Lord's, and therefore ours; let kings
Allow the common claim, and half be theirs;
If not, behold! the sacred lightning flies!'
Scholastic Discord, with a hundred tongues,
For science uttering jangling words obscure,
Where frighted reason never yet could dwell:
Of peremptory feature, cleric Pride,
Whose reddening cheek no contradiction bears;
And holy Slander, his associate firm,
On whom the lying spirit still descends:
Mother of tortures! persecuting Zeal,
High flashing in her hand the ready torch,
Or poniard bathed in unbelieving blood;
Hell's fiercest fiend! of saintly brow demure,
Assuming a celestial seraph's name,
While she beneath the blasphemous pretence
Of pleasing parent Heaven, the source of Love!
Has wrought more horrors, more detested deeds,
Than all the rest combined. Led on by her,
And wild of head to work her fell designs,
Came idiot Superstition; round with ears
Innumerous strowed, ten thousand monkish forms
With legends plied them, and with tenets, meant
To charm or scare the simple into slaves,
And poison reason; gross, she swallows all,
The most absurd believing ever most.

* Civil tyranny.—T.

Broad o'er the whole her universal night,
The gloom still doubling, Ignorance diffused.
" Nought to be seen, but visionary monks
To councils strolling, and embroiling creeds;
Banditti Saints,* disturbing distant lands;
And unknown nations, wandering for a home.
All lay reversed: the sacred arts of rule
Turned to flagitious leagues against mankind,
And arts of plunder more and more avowed;
Pure plain Devotion† to a solemn farce;
To holy dotage Virtue, even to guile,
To murder, and a mockery of oaths;
Brave ancient Freedom to the rage of slaves,‡
Proud of their state, and fighting for their chains;
Dishonoured Courage to the bravo's trade,§
To civil broil; and Glory to romance.
Thus human life, unhinged, to ruin reeled,
And giddy Reason tottered on her throne.
" At last Heaven's best inexplicable scheme,
Disclosing, bade new brightening eras smile.
The high command gone forth, Arts in my train,
And azure-mantled Science, swift we spread
A sounding pinion. Eager pity, mixed
With indignation, urged her downward flight.
On Latium first we stooped, for doubtful life
That panted, sunk beneath unnumbered woes.
Ah, poor Italia! what a bitter cup
Of vengeance hast thou drained? Goth, Vandals,
Huns,

* The Crusaders.—T.
† The corruptions of the church of Rome.—T.
‡ Vassalage, whence the attachment of clans to their chief.—T.
§ Duelling.—T.

Lombards, barbarians broke from every land,
How many a ruffian form hast thou beheld?
What horrid jargons heard, where rage alone
Was all thy frighted ear could comprehend?
How frequent by the red inhuman hand,
Yet warm with brother's, husband's, father's blood,
Hast thou thy matrons and thy virgins seen
To violation dragged, and mingled death?
What conflagrations, earthquakes, ravage, floods,
Have turned thy cities into stony wilds;
And succourless, and bare, the poor remains
Of wretches forth to Nature's common cast?
Added to these the still continual waste
Of inbred foes* that on thy vitals prey,
And, double tyrants, seize the very soul.
Where hadst thou treasures for this rapine all?
These hungry myriads, that thy bowels tore,
Heaped sack on sack, and buried in their rage
Wonders of art; whence this grey scene, a mine
Of more than gold becomes and orient gems,
Where Egypt, Greece, and Rome united glow.
"Here Sculpture, Painting, Architecture, bent
From ancient models to restore their arts,
Remained. A little trace we how they rose.
"Amid the hoary ruins, Sculpture first,
Deep digging, from the cavern dark and damp,
Their grave for ages, bade her marble race
Spring to new light. Joy sparkled in her eyes,
And old remembrance thrilled in every thought,
As she the pleasing resurrection saw.
In leaning site, respiring from his toils,

* The Hierarchy.—T.

The well known Hero,* who delivered Greece,
His ample chest, all tempested with force,
Unconquerable reared. She saw the head,
Breathing the hero, small, of Grecian size,
Scarce more extensive than the sinewy neck:
The spreading shoulders, muscular, and broad;
The whole a mass of swelling sinews, touched
Into harmonious shape; she saw, and joyed.
The yellow hunter, Meleager, raised
His beauteous front, and through the finished whole
Shows what ideas smiled of old in Greece.
Of raging aspect, rushed impetuous forth
The Gladiator:† pitiless his look,
And each keen sinew braced, the storm of war,
Ruffling, o'er all his nervous body frowns.
The dying other‡ from the gloom she drew:
Supported on his shortened arm he leans,
Prone, agonizing; with incumbent fate,
Heavy declines his head; yet dark beneath
The suffering feature sullen vengeance lours,
Shame, indignation, unaccomplished rage,
And still the cheated eye expects his fall.
All conquest-flushed, from prostrate Python, came
The quivered God.§ In graceful act he stands,
His arm extended with the slackened bow:
Light flows his easy robe, and fair displays
A manly softened form. The bloom of gods
Seems youthful o'er the beardless cheek to wave:
His features yet heroic ardour warms;

* The Hercules of Farnese.—T. † Fighting Gladiator.—T.
‡ Dying Gladiator.—T. § Apollo of Belvidere.—T.

And sweet subsiding to a native smile,
Mixed with the joy elating conquest gives,
A scattered frown exalts his matchless air.
On Flora moved; her full proportioned limbs
Rise through the mantle fluttering in the breeze.
The Queen of Love* arose, as from the deep
She sprung in all the melting pomp of charms.
Bashful she bends, her well taught look aside
Turns in enchanting guise, where dubious mix
Vain conscious beauty, a dissembled sense
Of modest shame, and slippery looks of love.
The gazer grows enamoured, and the stone,
As if exulting in its conquest, smiles.
So turned each limb, so swelled with softening art,
That the deluded eye the marble doubts.
At last her utmost masterpiece† she found,
That Maro fired;‡ the miserable sire,
Wrapt with his sons in fate's severest grasp:
The serpents, twisting round, their stringent folds
Inextricable tie. Such passion here,
Such agonies, such bitterness of pain,
Seem so to tremble through the tortured stone,
That the touched heart engrosses all the view.
Almost unmarked the best proportions pass,
That ever Greece beheld; and, seen alone,
On the rapt eye the imperious passions seize:
The father's double pangs, both for himself
And sons convulsed; to Heaven his rueful look,
Imploring aid, and half accusing, cast;

* Venus of Medici.—T.

† The group of Laocoon and his two sons, destroyed by two serpents.—T.

‡ See Æneid II. ver. 199—227.—T.

His fell despair with indignation mixed,
As the strong curling monsters from his side
His full extended fury cannot tear.
More tender touched, with varied art, his sons
All the soft rage of younger passions show.
In a boy's helpless fate one sinks oppressed;
While, yet unpierced, the frighted other tries
His foot to steal out of the horrid twine.
" She bore no more, but straight from Gothic rust
Her chisel cleared, and dust* and fragments drove
Impetuous round. Successive as it went
From son to son, with more enlivening touch,
From the brute rock it called the breathing form;
Till, in a legislator's awful grace
Dressed, Buonaroti bade a Moses† rise,
And, looking love immense, a Saviour God.†
" Of these observant, Painting felt the fire
Burn inward. Then ecstatic she diffused
The canvas, seized the pallet, with quick hand
The colours brewed; and on the void expanse
Her gay creation poured, her mimic world.
Poor was the manner of her eldest race,
Barren, and dry; just struggling from the taste
That had for ages scared, in cloisters dim
The superstitious herd: yet glorious then
Were deemed their works; where undeveloped lay
The future wonders that enriched mankind,

* It is reported of Michael Angelo Buonaroti, the most celebrated master in modern sculpture, that he wrought with a kind of inspiration, or enthusiastical fury, which produced the effect here mentioned.—T.

† Esteemed the two finest pieces of modern sculpture.—T.

And a new light and grace o'er Europe cast.
Arts gradual gather streams. Enlarging this,
To each his portion of her various gifts
The Goddess dealt, to none indulging all;
No, not to Raphael. At kind distance still
Perfection stands, like happiness, to tempt
The eternal chase. In elegant design,
Improving nature: in ideas fair,
Or great, extracted from the fine antique;
In attitude, expression, airs divine;
Her sons of Rome and Florence bore the prize.
To those of Venice she the magic art
Of colours melting into colours gave.
Theirs too it was by one embracing mass
Of light and shade, that settles round the whole,
Or varies tremulous from part to part,
O'er all a binding harmony to throw,
To raise the picture, and repose the sight.
The Lombard school,* succeeding, mingled both.
" Meantime dread fanes, and palaces, around,
Reared the magnific front. Music again
Her universal language of the heart
Renewed; and, rising from the plaintive vale,
To the full concert spread, and solemn quire.
" Even bigots smiled; to their protection took
Arts not their own, and from them borrowed pomp:
For in a tyrant's garden these awhile
May bloom, though freedom be their parent soil.
" And now confessed, with gently growing gleam
The morning shone, and westward streamed its light.

* The school of the Caracci.—T.

The Muse awoke. Not sooner on the wing
Is the gay bird of dawn. Artless her voice,
Untaught and wild, yet warbled through the woods
Romantic lays. But as her northern course
She, with her tutor Science, in my train,
Ardent pursued, her strains more noble grew:
While Reason drew the plan, the Heart informed
The moral page, and Fancy lent it grace.

"Rome and her circling deserts cast behind,
I passed not idle to my great sojourn.

"On Arno's* fertile plain, where the rich vine
Luxuriant o'er Etrurian mountains roves,
Safe in the lap reposed of private bliss,
I small republics† raised. Thrice happy they!
Had social freedom bound their peace, and arts,
Instead of ruling power, ne'er meant for them,
Employed their little cares, and saved their fate.

"Beyond the rugged Apennines, that roll
Far through Italian bounds their wavy tops,
My path too I with public blessings strowed:
Free states and cities, where the Lombard plain,
In spite of culture negligent and gross,
From her deep bosom pours unbidden joys,
And green o'er all the land a garden spreads.

"The barren rocks themselves beneath my foot,
Relenting bloomed on the Ligurian shore.
Thick swarming people‡ there, like emmets, seized

* The river Arno runs through Florence.—T.

† The republics of Florence, Pisa, Lucca, and Sienna. They formerly have had very cruel wars together, but are now all peaceably subject to the Great Duke of Tuscany, except it be Lucca, which still maintains the form of a republic.—T.

‡ The Genoese territory is reckoned very populous; but

Amid surrounding cliffs, the scattered spots,
Which Nature left in her destroying rage,*
Made their own fields, nor sighed for other lands.
There, in white prospect from the rocky hill
Gradual descending to the sheltered shore,
By me proud Genoa's marble turrets rose.
And while my genuine spirit warmed her sons,
Beneath her Dorias, not unworthy, she
Vied for the trident of the narrow seas,
Ere Britain yet had opened all the main.
"Nor be the then triumphant state forgot;†
Where,‡ pushed from plundered earth, a remnant still
Inspired by me, through the dark ages kept
Of my old Roman flame some sparks alive:
The seeming god-built city! which my hand
Deep in the bosom fixed of wondering seas.
Astonished mortals sailed, with pleasing awe,
Around the sea-girt walls, by Neptune fenced,
And down the briny street; where on each hand,
Amazing seen amid unstable waves,
The splendid palace shines; and rising tides,
The green steps marking, murmur at the door.
To this fair Queen of Adria's stormy gulf,
The mart of nations! long, obedient seas

the towns and villages for the most part lie hid among the Apennine rocks and mountains.—T.

* According to Dr. Burnet's system of the Deluge.—T.

† Venice was the most flourishing city in Europe, with regard to trade, before the passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope and America was discovered.—T.

‡ Those who fled to some marshes in the Adriatic gulf, from the desolation spread over Italy by an irruption of the Huns, first founded there this famous city, about the beginning of the fifth century.—T.

Rolled all the treasure of the radiant East.
But now no more. Than one great tyrant worse
(Whose shared oppression lightens, as diffused,)
Each subject tearing, many tyrants rose.
The least the proudest. Joined in dark cabal,
They jealous, watchful, silent, and severe,
Cast o'er the whole indissoluble chains:
The softer shackles of luxurious ease
They likewise added, to secure their sway.
Thus Venice fainter shines; and Commerce thus,
Of toil impatient, flags the drooping sail.
Bursting, besides, his ancient bounds, he took
A larger circle:* found another seat,†
Opening a thousand ports, and charmed with toil,
Whom nothing can dismay, far other sons.
"The mountains then, clad with eternal snow,
Confessed my power. Deep as the rampant rocks,
By Nature thrown insuperable round,
I planted there a league of friendly states,‡
And bade plain Freedom their ambition be.
There in the vale, where rural plenty fills,
From lakes, and meads, and furrowed fields, her horn,
Chief,§ where the Leman pure emits the Rhone,
Rare to be seen! unguilty cities rise,
Cities of brothers formed: while equal life,

* The Main Ocean.—T. † Great Britain.—T.

‡ The Swiss Cantons.—T.

§ Geneva, situated on the Lacus Lemanus, a small state, but noble example of the blessings of civil and religious liberty. It is remarkable that since the founding of this Republic not one citizen has been so much as suspected to have been guilty of corruption or public rapine. A virtue this! meriting the attention of every Briton.—T.

Accorded gracious with revolving power,
Maintains them free; and, in their happy streets,
Nor cruel deed, nor misery, is known.
For valour, faith, and innocence of life,
Renowned, a rough laborious people, there,
Not only give the dreadful Alps to smile,
And press their culture on retiring snows;
But, to firm order trained and patient war,
They likewise know, beyond the nerve remiss
Of mercenary force, how to defend
The tasteful little their hard toil has earned,
And the proud arm of Bourbon to defy.
"Even, cheered by me, their shaggy mountains charm,
More than or Gallic or Italian plains;
And sickening Fancy oft, when absent long,
Pines* to behold their Alpine views again:
The hollow-winding stream: the vale, fair spread
Amid an amphitheatre of hills;
Whence, vapour-winged, the sudden tempest springs:
From steep to steep ascending, the gay train
Of fogs, thick-rolled into romantic shapes:
The flitting cloud, against the summit dashed;
And, by the sun illumined, pouring bright
A gemmy shower; hung o'er amazing rocks,
The mountain ash, and solemn sounding pine:
The snow-fed torrent, in white mazes tossed,
Down to the clear ethereal lake below:

* It is reported of the Swiss, that, after having been long absent from their native country, they are seized with such a violent desire of seeing it again, as affects them with a kind of languishing indisposition, called the Swiss sickness.—T.

And, high o'ertopping all the broken scene,
The mountain fading into sky; where shines
On winter, winter shivering, and whose top
Licks from their cloudy magazine the snows.
"From these descending, as I waved my course
O'er vast Germania, the ferocious nurse
Of hardy men, and hearts affronting death,
I gave some favoured cities* there to lift
A nobler brow, and through their swarming streets,
More busy, wealthy, cheerful, and alive,
In each contented face to look my soul.
"Thence the loud Baltic passing, black with storm,
To wintry Scandinavia's utmost bound;
There, I the manly race,† the parent hive
Of the mixed kingdoms, formed into a state
More regularly free. By keener air
Their genius purged, and tempered hard by frost,
Tempest and toil their nerves, the sons of those
Whose‡ only terror was a bloodless death,
They, wise and dauntless, still sustain my cause.
Yet there I fixed not. Turning to the south,
The whispering zephyrs sighed at my delay."
Here, with the shifted vision, burst my joy:
"O the dear prospect! O majestic view!
See Britain's empire! lo! the watery vast
Wide-waves, diffusing the cerulean plain.
And now, methinks, like clouds at distance seen,
Emerging white from deeps of ether, dawn
My kindred cliffs; whence, wafted in the gale,
Ineffable, a secret sweetness breathes.

* The Hans towns.—T. † The Swedes.—T.
‡ See note ‡ p. 88.—T.

Goddess, forgive!—My heart, surprised, o'erflows
With filial fondness for the land you bless."
As parents to a child complacent deign
Approvance, the celestial brightness smiled;
Then thus—" As o'er the wave-resounding deep,
To my near reign, the happy isle, I steered
With easy wing; behold! from surge to surge,
Stalked the tremendous Genius of the Deep.
Around him clouds, in mingled tempest, hung;
Thick flashing meteors crowned his starry head;
And ready thunder reddened in his hand,
Or from it streamed compressed the gloomy cloud.
Where'er he looked, the trembling waves recoiled.
He needs but strike the conscious flood, and shook
From shore to shore, in agitation dire,
It works his dreadful will. To me his voice
(Like that hoarse blast that round the cavern howls,
Mixed with the murmurs of the falling main,)
Addressed, began—' By Fate commissioned, go,
My Sister-Goddess now, to yon blest isle,
Henceforth the partner of my rough domain.
All my dread walks to Britons open lie.
Those that refulgent, or with rosy morn,
Or yellow evening, flame; those that, profuse,
Drunk by equator suns, severely shine;
Or those that, to the poles approaching, rise
In billows rolling into Alps of ice.
Even, yet untouched by daring keel, be theirs
The vast Pacific; that on other worlds,
Their future conquest, rolls resounding tides.
Long I maintained inviolate my reign;
Nor Alexanders me, nor Cæsars braved.
Still, in the crook of shore, the coward sail

Till now low crept; and peddling commerce plied
Between near joining lands. For Britons, chief,
It was reserved, with star-directed prow,
To dare the middle deep, and drive assured
To distant nations through the pathless main.
Chief, for their fearless hearts the glory waits,
Long months from land, while the black stormy night
Around them rages, on the groaning mast
With unshook knee to know their giddy way;
To sing, unquelled, amid the lashing wave;
To laugh at danger. Theirs the triumph be,
By deep Invention's keen pervading eye,
The heart of Courage, and the hand of Toil,
Each conquered ocean staining with their blood,
Instead of treasure robbed by ruffian war,
Round social earth to circle fair exchange,
And bind the nations in a golden chain.
To these I honoured stoop. Rushing to light
A race of men behold! whose daring deeds
Will in renown exalt my nameless plains
O'er those of fabling earth, as hers to mine
In terror yield. Nay, could my savage heart
Such glories check, their unsubmitting soul
Would all my fury brave, my tempest climb,
And might in spite of me my kingdom force.'
Here, waiting no reply, the shadowy power
Eased the dark sky, and to the deeps returned:
While the loud thunder rattling from his hand,
Auspicious, shook opponent Gallia's shore.

"Of this encounter glad, my way to land
I quick pursued, that from the smiling sea
Received me joyous. Loud acclaims were heard;

And music, more than mortal, warbling, filled
With pleased astonishment the labouring hind,
Who for a while the unfinished furrow left,
And let the listening steer forget his toil.
Unseen by grosser eye, Britannia breathed,
And her aërial train, these sounds of joy.
For of old time, since first the rushing flood,
Urged by Almighty power, this favoured isle
Turned flashing from the continent aside,
Indented shore to shore responsive still,
Its guardian she—the Goddess, whose staid eye
Beams the dark azure of the doubtful dawn.
Her tresses, like a flood of softened light
Through clouds imbrowned, in waving circles play.
Warm on her cheek sits Beauty's brightest rose.
Of high demeanour, stately, shedding grace
With every motion. Full her rising chest;
And new ideas, from her finished shape,
Charmed Sculpture taking might improve her art.
Such the fair Guardian of an isle that boasts,
Profuse as vernal blooms, the fairest dames.
High shining on the promontory's brow,
Awaiting me, she stood; with hope inflamed,
By my mixed spirit burning in her sons,
To firm, to polish, and exalt the state.
"The native Genii, round her, radiant smiled.
Courage, of soft deportment, aspect calm,
Unboastful, suffering long, and, till provoked,
As mild and harmless as the sporting child;
But, on just reason, once his fury roused,
No lion springs more eager to his prey:
Blood is a pastime; and his heart, elate,
Knows no depressing fear. That Virtue known

By the relenting look, whose equal heart
For others feels, as for another self:
Of various name, as various objects wake,
Warm into action, the kind sense within:
Whether the blameless poor, the nobly maimed,
The lost to reason, the declined in life,
The helpless young that kiss no mother's hand,
And the grey second infancy of age,
She gives in public families to live,
A sight to gladden Heaven! whether she stands
Fair beckoning at the hospitable gate,
And bids the stranger take repose and joy:
Whether, to solace honest labour, she
Rejoices those that make the land rejoice:
Or whether to Philosophy, and Arts,
(At once the basis and the finished pride
Of government and life) she spreads her hand;
Nor knows her gift profuse, nor seems to know,
Doubling her bounty, that she gives at all.
Justice to these her awful presence joined,
The mother of the state! No low revenge,
No turbid passions in her breast ferment:
Tender, serene, compassionate of vice,
As the last woe that can afflict mankind,
She punishment awards; yet of the good
More piteous still, and of the suffering whole,
Awards it firm. So fair her just decree,
That, in his judging peers, each on himself
Pronounces his own doom. O happy land!
Where reigns alone this justice of the free!
Mid the bright group, Sincerity his front,
Diffusive, reared; his pure untroubled eye
The fount of truth. The thoughtful Power, apart,

Now, pensive, cast on earth his fixed regard,
Now, touched celestial, launched it on the sky.
The Genius he whence Britain shines supreme,
The land of light, and rectitude of mind.
He, too, the fire of fancy feeds intense,
With all the train of passions thence derived:
Not kindling quick, a noisy transient blaze,
But gradual, silent, lasting, and profound.
Near him Retirement, pointing to the shade,
And Independence stood: the generous pair,
That simple life, the quiet-whispering grove,
And the still raptures of the free-born soul,
To cates prefer by Virtue bought, not earned,
Proudly prefer them to the servile pomp,
And to the heart-embittered joys of slaves.
Or should the latter, to the public scene
Demanded, quit his silvan friend awhile;
Nought can his firmness shake, nothing seduce
His zeal, still active for the commonweal;
Nor stormy tyrants, nor corruption's tools,
Foul ministers, dark-working by the force
Of secret-sapping gold. All their vile arts,
Their shameful honours, their perfidious gifts,
He greatly scorns; and, if he must betray
His plundered country, or his power resign,
A moment's parley were eternal shame:
Illustrious into private life again,
From dirty levees he unstained ascends,
And firm in senates stands the patriot's ground,
Or draws new vigour in the peaceful shade.
Aloof the bashful virtue hovered coy,
Proving by sweet distrust distrusted worth.
Rough Labour closed the train: and in his hand

Rude, callous, sinew-swelled, and black with toil,
Came manly Indignation. Sour he seems,
And more than seems, by lawless pride assailed;
Yet kind at heart, and just, and generous; there
No vengeance lurks, no pale insidious gall;
Even in the very luxury of rage,
He softening can forgive a gallant foe;
The nerve, support, and glory of the land!
Nor be Religion, rational and free,
Here passed in silence; whose enraptured eye
Sees Heaven with earth connected, human things
Linked to divine: who not from servile fear,
By rites for some weak tyrant incense fit,
The God of Love adores, but from a heart
Effusing gladness, into pleasing awe
That now astonished swells, now in a calm
Of fearless confidence that smiles serene;
That lives devotion, one continual hymn,
And then most grateful, when Heaven's bounty most
Is right enjoyed. This ever cheerful Power
O'er the raised circle rayed superior day.

"I joyed to join the Virtues, whence my reign
O'er Albion was to rise. Each cheering each,
And, like the circling planets from the sun,
All borrowing beams from me, a heightened zeal
Impatient fired us to commence our toils,
Or pleasures rather. Long the pungent time
Passed not in mutual hails; but, through the land
Darting our light, we shone the fogs away.

"The Virtues conquer with a single look.
Such grace, such beauty, such victorious light,
Live in their presence, stream in every glance,

That the soul won, enamoured, and refined,
Grows their own image, pure ethereal flame.
Hence the foul Demons, that oppose our reign,
Would still from us deluded mortals wrap;
Or in gross shades they drown the visual ray,
Or by the fogs of prejudice, where mix
Falsehood and truth confounded, foil the sense
With vain refracted images of bliss.
But chief around the court of flattered kings
They roll the dusky rampart, wall o'er wall
Of darkness pile, and with their thickest shade
Secure the throne. No savage Alp, the den
Of wolves, and bears, and monstrous things obscene,
That vex the swain and waste the country round,
Protected lies beneath a deeper cloud:
Yet there we sometimes send a searching ray.
As, at the sacred opening of the morn,
The prowling race retire; so, pierced severe,
Before our potent blaze these Demons fly,
And all their works dissolve——the whispered tale,
That, like the fabling Nile, no fountain knows;
Fair-faced Deceit, whose wily conscious eye
Ne'er looks direct; the tongue that licks the dust,
But, when it safely dares, as prompt to sting:
Smooth crocodile Destruction, whose fell tears
Ensnare: the Janus-face of courtly Pride;
One to superiors heaves submissive eyes,
On hapless worth the other scowls disdain;
Cheeks that for some weak tenderness, alone,
Some virtuous slip, can wear a blush; the laugh
Profane, when midnight bowls disclose the heart,
At starving Virtue, and at Virtue's fools;
Determined to be broke, the plighted faith;

Nay more, the godless oath, that knows no ties:
Soft-buzzing Slander; silky moths, that eat
An honest name: the harpy hand, and maw,
Of avaricious Luxury; who makes
The throne his shelter, venal laws his fort,
And, by his service, who betrays his king.
" Now turn your view, and mark from Celtic* night
To present grandeur how my Britain rose.
" Bold were those Britons, who, the careless sons
Of Nature, roamed the forest-bounds, at once
Their verdant city, high-embowering fane,
And the gay circle of their woodland wars:
For by the Druid† taught, that death but shifts
The vital scene, they that prime fear despised;
And, prone to rush on steel, disdained to spare
An ill-saved life that must again return.
Erect from Nature's hand, by tyrant force,
And still more tyrant custom, unsubdued,
Man knows no master save creating Heaven,
Or such as choice and common good ordain.
This general sense, with which the nations I
Promiscuous fire, in Britons burned intense,
Of future times prophetic. Witness, Rome,
Who saw'st thy Cæsar, from the naked land,
Whose only fort was British hearts, repelled,
To seek Pharsalian wreaths. Witness, the toil,
The blood of ages, bootless to secure,
Beneath an empire's‡ yoke, a stubborn isle,

* Great Britain was peopled by the Celtæ or Gauls.—T

† The Druids, among the ancient Gauls and Britons, had the care and direction of all religious matters.—T.

‡ The Roman Empire.—T.

Disputed hard, and never quite subdued.
The North* remained untouched, where those who scorned
To stoop, retired; and, to their keen effort
Yielding at last, recoiled the Roman power.
In vain, unable to sustain the shock,
From sea to sea desponding legions raised
The wall immense,† and yet, on summer's eve,
While sport his lambkins round, the shepherd's gaze.
Continual o'er it burst the northern storm,‡
As often, checked, receded; threatening hoarse
A swift return. But the devouring flood
No more endured control, when, to support
The last remains of empire,§ was recalled
The weary Roman, and the Briton lay
Unnerved, exhausted, spiritless, and sunk.
Great proof! how men enfeeble into slaves.
The sword‖ behind him flashed; before him roared,
Deaf to his woes, the deep. Forlorn, around
He rolled his eye, not sparkling ardent flame,

* Caledonia, inhabited by the Scots and Picts; whither a great many Britons, who would not submit to the Romans, retired.—T.

† The wall of Severus, built upon Adrian's rampart, which ran for eighty miles quite across the country, from the mouth of the Tyne to Solway Frith.—T.

‡ Irruptions of the Scots and Picts.—T.

§ The Roman empire being miserably torn by the northern nations, Britain was for ever abandoned by the Romans in the year 426 or 427.—T.

‖ The Britons applying to Ætius the Roman general for assistance, thus expressed their miserable condition:—"We know not which way to turn us. The Barbarians drive us to sea, and the sea forces us back to the Barbarians; between which we have only the choice of two deaths, either to be swallowed up by the waves, or butchered by the sword."—T.

As when Caractacus* to battle led
Silurian swains, and Boadicea† taught
Her raging troops the miseries of slaves.
" Then (sad relief!) from the bleak coast, that hears
The German Ocean roar, deep-blooming, strong,
And yellow-haired, the blue-eyed Saxon came.
He came implored, but came with other aim
Than to protect. For conquest and defence
Suffices the same arm. With the fierce race
Poured in a fresh invigorating stream,
Blood, where unquelled a mighty spirit glowed.
Rash war, and perilous battle, their delight;
And immature, and red with glorious wounds,
Unpeaceful death their choice: deriving thence
A right to feast, and drain immortal bowls,
In Odin's hall;‡ whose blazing roof resounds

* King of the Silures, famous for his great exploits, and accounted the best general Great Britain had ever produced. The Silures were esteemed the bravest and most powerful of all the Britons: they inhabited Herefordshire, Radnorshire, Brecknockshire, Monmouthshire, and Glamorganshire.—T.

† Queen of the Iceni: her story is well known.—T.

‡ It is certain, that an opinion was fixed and general among them (the Goths) that death was but the entrance into another life; that all men who lived lazy and unactive lives, and died natural deaths, by sickness or by age, went into vast caves under ground, all dark and miry, full of noisome creatures usual to such places, and there for ever grovelled in endless stench and misery. On the contrary, all who gave themselves to warlike actions and enterprises, to the conquest of their neighbours and the slaughter of their enemies, and died in battle, or of violent deaths upon bold adventures or resolutions, went immediately to the vast hall or palace of Odin, their god of war, who eternally kept open house for all such guests, where they were entertained at infinite tables, in perpetual feasts and mirth, carousing in

The genial uproar of those shades, who fall
In desperate fight, or by some brave attempt;
And though more polished times the martial creed
Disown, yet still the fearless habit lives.
Nor were the surly gifts of war their all.
Wisdom was likewise theirs, indulgent laws,
The calm gradations of art-nursing peace,
And matchless order, the deep basis still
On which ascends my British reign. Untamed
To the refining subtleties of slaves,
They brought a happy government along;
Formed by that freedom, which, with secret voice,
Impartial Nature teaches all her sons;
And which, of old, through the whole Scythian mass,
I strong inspired. Monarchical their state,
But prudently confined, and mingled wise
Of each harmonious power: only, too much,
Imperious war into their rule infused,
Prevailed their General-King, and Chieftain-Thanes.
"In many a field, by civil fury stained,
Bled the discordant Heptarchy;* and long
(Educing good from ill) the battle groaned;
Ere, blood-cemented, Anglo-Saxons saw

bowls made of the skulls of their enemies they had slain; according to the number of whom, every one in these mansions of pleasure was the most honoured and best entertained. —*Sir William Temple's Essay on Heroic Virtue.*—T.

* The seven kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxons, considered as being united into one common government, under a general in chief or monarch, and by the means of an assembly general, or wittenagemot.—T.

Egbert* and Peace on one united throne.
" No sooner dawned the fair disclosing calm
Of brighter days, when lo! the North anew,
With stormy nations black, on England poured
Woes the severest e'er a people felt.
The Danish Raven,† lured by annual prey,
Hung o'er the land incessant. Fleet on fleet
Of barbarous pirates, unremitting tore
The miserable coast. Before them stalked,
Far seen, the Demon of devouring Flame;
Rapine, and Murder, all with blood besmeared,
Without or ear, or eye, or feeling heart:
While close behind them marched the sallow power
Of desolating Famine, who delights
In grass-grown cities, and in desert fields;
And purple-spotted Pestilence, by whom
Even Friendship scared, in sickening horror sinks
Each social sense and tenderness of life.
Fixing at last, the sanguinary race
Spread, from the Humber's loud resounding shore
To where the Thames devolves his gentle maze,
And with superior arm the Saxon awed.
But Superstition first, and monkish dreams,
And monk-directed cloister-seeking kings,
Had eat away his vigour, eat away
His edge of Courage, and depressed the soul
Of conquering Freedom, which he once respired.

* Egbert, King of Wessex, who, after having reduced all the other kingdoms of the Heptarchy under his dominion, was the first king of England.—T.

† A famous Danish standard was called Reafan, or Raven. The Danes imagined that, before a battle, the Raven wrought upon this standard clapped its wings or hung down its head, in token of victory or defeat.—T.

Thus cruel ages passed; and rare appeared
White-mantled Peace, exulting o'er the vale,
As when, with Alfred,* from the wilds she came
To policed cities and protected plains.
Thus by degrees the Saxon empire sunk,
Then set entire in Hastings'† bloody field.
"Compendious war! (on Britain's glory bent,
So fate ordained) in that decisive day,
The haughty Norman seized at once an isle,
For which, through many a century, in vain,
The Roman, Saxon, Dane, had toiled and bled.
Of Gothic nations this the final burst;
And, mixed the genius of these people all,
Their virtues mixed in one exalted stream,
Here the rich tide of English blood grew full.
"Awhile my Spirit slept; the land awhile,
Affrighted, drooped beneath despotic rage.
Instead of Edward's‡ equal, gentle laws,
The furious victor's partial will prevailed.
All prostrate lay; and, in the secret shade,
Deep stung but fearful Indignation, gnashed
His teeth. Of freedom, property, despoiled,
And of their bulwark, arms; with castles crushed,
With ruffians quartered o'er the bridled land;

* Alfred the Great, renowned in war, and no less famous in peace for his many excellent institutions, particularly that of juries.—T.

† The battle of Hastings, in which Harold II, the last of the Saxon kings, was slain, and William the Conqueror made himself master of England.—T.

‡ Edward the Confessor, who reduced the West Saxon, Mercian, and Danish laws into one body; which from that time became common to all England, under the name of "The Laws of Edward."—T.

The shivering wretches, at the curfew* sound,
Dejected shrunk into their sordid beds,
And, through the mournful gloom, of ancient times,
Mused sad, or dreamt of better. Even to feed
A tyrant's idle sport the peasant starved:
To the wild herd, the pasture of the tame,
The cheerful hamlet, spiry town, was given,
And the brown forest† roughened wide around.
"But this so dead, so vile submission, long
Endured not. Gathering force, my gradual flame
Shook off the mountain of tyrannic sway.
Unused to bend, impatient of control,
Tyrants themselves the common tyrant checked.
The Church, by kings intractable and fierce,
Denied her portion of the plundered state,
Or tempted, by the timorous and weak,
To gain new ground, first taught their rapine law.
The Barons next a nobler league began,
Both those of English, and of Norman race,
In one fraternal nation blended now,
The nation of the Free! pressed by a band‡
Of Patriots, ardent as the summer's noon
That looks delighted on, the tyrant see!
Mark! how with feigned alacrity he bears
His strong reluctance down, his dark revenge,

* The Curfew-Bell (from the French Couvrefeu) which was rung every night at eight of the clock, to warn the English to put out their fires and candles, under the penalty of a severe fine.—T.

† The New Forest in Hampshire; to make which, the country for above thirty miles in compass was laid waste.—T.

‡ On the 5th of June, 1215, King John, met by the Barons on Runnemede, signed the Great Charter of Liberties, or Magna Charta.—T.

And gives the Charter, by which life indeed
Becomes of price, a glory to be man.
" Through this, and through succeeding reigns affirmed
These long-contested rights, the wholesome winds
Of Opposition* hence began to blow,
And often since have lent the country life.
Before their breath Corruption's insect-blights,
The darkening clouds of evil counsel fly;
Or should they sounding swell, a putrid court,
A pestilential ministry, they purge,
And ventilated states renew their bloom.
" Though with the tempered Monarchy here mixed
Aristocratic sway, the People still,
Flattered by this or that, as interest leaned,
No full protection knew. For me reserved,
And for my Commons, was that glorious turn.
They crowned my first attempt, in senates† rose
The fort of Freedom! Slow till then, alone,
Had worked that general liberty, that soul

* The league formed by the Barons, during the reign of John, in the year 1213, was the first confederacy made in England in defence of the nation's interest against the King.—T.

† The commons are generally thought to have been first represented in parliament towards the end of Henry the Third's reign. To a parliament called in the year 1264, each county was ordered to send four knights, as representatives of their respective shires: and to a parliament called in the year following, each county was ordered to send, as their representatives, two knights, and each city and borough as many citizens and burgesses. Till then, history makes no mention of them; whence a very strong argument may be drawn, to fix the original of the House of Commons to that era.—T.

Which generous nature breathes, and which, when left
By me to bondage, was corrupted Rome,
I through the northern nations wide diffused.
Hence many a people, fierce with freedom, rushed
From the rude iron regions of the North,
To Libyan deserts swarm protruding swarm,
And poured new spirit through a slavish world.
Yet, o'er these Gothic states, the King and Chiefs
Retained the high prerogative of war,
And with enormous property engrossed
The mingled power. But on Britannia's shore
Now present, I to raise my reign began
By raising the Democracy, the third
And broadest bulwark of the guarded state.
Then was the full the perfect plan disclosed
Of Britain's matchless constitution, mixed
Of mutual checking and supporting powers,
King, Lords, and Commons; nor the name of free
Deserving, while the vassal-many drooped:
For, since the moment of the whole they form,
So, as depressed or raised, the balance they
Of public welfare and of glory cast.
Mark from this period the continual proof.
" When Kings of narrow genius, minion-rid,
Neglecting faithful worth for fawning slaves;
Proudly regardless of their people's plaints,
And poorly passive of insulting foes;
Double, not prudent, obstinate, not firm,
Their mercy fear, necessity their faith;
Instead of generous fire, presumptuous, hot,
Rash to resolve, and slothful to perform;
Tyrants at once and slaves, imperious, mean,

To want rapacious joining shameful waste;
By counsels weak and wicked, easy roused
To paltry schemes of absolute command,
To seek their splendour in their sure disgrace,
And in a broken ruined people wealth:
When such o'ercast the state, no bond of love,
No heart, no soul, no unity, no nerve,
Combined the loose disjointed public, lost
To fame abroad, to happiness at home.
"But when an Edward,* and a Henry†
breathed
Through the charmed whole one all-exerting soul:
Drawn sympathetic from his dark retreat,
When wide-attracted merit round them glowed:
When counsels just, extensive, generous, firm,
Amid the maze of state, determined kept
Some ruling point in view: when, on the stock
Of public good and glory grafted, spread
Their palms, their laurels; or, if thence they
strayed,
Swift to return, and patient of restraint:
When regal state, pre-eminence of place,
They scorned to deem pre-eminence of ease,
To be luxurious drones, that only rob
The busy hive: as in distinction, power,
Indulgence, honour, and advantage, first;
When they too claimed in virtue, danger, toil,
Superior rank; with equal hand, prepared
To guard the subject, and to quell the foe:
When such with me their vital influence shed,
No muttered grievance, hopeless sigh, was heard;
No foul distrust through wary senates ran,

* Edward III.—T. † Henry V.—T.

Confined their bounty, and their ardour quenched:
On aid, unquestioned, liberal aid was given:
Safe in their conduct, by their valour fired,
Fond where they led victorious armies rushed;
And Cressy, Poitiers, Agincourt* proclaim
What Kings supported by almighty Love,
And People fired with Liberty, can do.
" Be veiled the savage reigns,† when kindred rage
The numerous once Plantagenets devoured,
A race to vengeance vowed! and, when oppressed
By private feuds, almost extinguished lay
My quivering flame. But, in the next, behold!
A cautious tyrant‡ lend it oil anew.
" Proud, dark, suspicious, brooding o'er his gold,
As how to fix his throne he jealous cast
His crafty views around; pierced with a ray,
Which on his timid mind I darted full,
He marked the Barons of excessive sway,
At pleasure making and unmaking kings;§
And hence, to crush these petty tyrants, planned
A law,‖ that let them, by the silent waste
Of luxury, their landed wealth diffuse,
And with that wealth their implicated power.
By soft degrees a mighty change ensued,

* Three famous battles, gained by the English over the French.—T.

† During the civil wars, betwixt the families of York and Lancaster.—T.

‡ Henry VII.—T.

§ The famous Earl of Warwick, during the reigns of Henry VI. and Edward IV. was called the "King Maker."—T.

‖ Permitting the Barons to alienate their lands.—T.

Even working to this day. With streams, deduced
From these diminished floods, the country smiled.
As when impetuous from the snow-heaped Alps,
To vernal suns relenting, pours the Rhine;
While, undivided, oft, with wasteful sweep,
He foams along; but through Batavian meads,
Branched into fair canals, indulgent flows;
Waters a thousand fields; and culture, trade,
Towns, meadows, gliding ships, and villas mixed,
A rich, a wondrous landscape rises round.
"His furious son* the soul-enslaving chain,†
Which many a doting venerable age
Had link by link strong twisted round the land,
Shook off. No longer could be borne a power,
From Heaven pretended, to deceive, to void
Each solemn tie, to plunder without bounds,
To curb the generous soul, to fool mankind;
And, wild at last, to plunge into a sea
Of blood and horror. The returning light,
That first through Wickliff‡ streaked the priestly gloom,
Now burst in open day. Bared to the blaze,
Forth from the haunts of Superstition§ crawled
Her motley sons, fantastic figures all;
And, wide dispersed, their useless fetid wealth
In graceful labour bloomed, and fruits of peace.
"Trade, joined to these, on every sea displayed

* Henry VIII.—T. † Of papal dominion.—T.

‡ John Wickliff, doctor of divinity, who, towards the close of the fourteenth century, published doctrines very contrary to those of the church of Rome, and particularly denying the papal authority. His followers grew very numerous, and were called Lollards.—T.

§ Suppression of monasteries.—T.

A daring canvas, poured with every tide
A golden flood. From other worlds* were rolled
The guilty glittering stores, whose fatal charms,
By the plain Indian happily despised,
Yet worked his woe; and to the blissful groves,
Where Nature lived herself among her sons,
And Innocence and Joy for ever dwelt,
Drew rage unknown to pagan climes before,
The worst the zeal-inflamed barbarian drew.
Be no such horrid commerce, Britain, thine!
But want for want, with mutual aid, supply.
"The Commons thus enriched, and powerful grown,
Against the Barons weighed. Eliza then,
Amid these doubtful motions, steady, gave
The beam to fix. She! like the secret Eye,
That never closes on a guarded world,
So sought, so marked, so seized the public good,
That self-supported, without one ally,
She awed her inward, quelled her circling foes.
Inspired by me, beneath her sheltering arm,
In spite of raging universal sway †
And raging seas repressed, the Belgic states,
My bulwark on the continent, arose.
Matchless in all the spirit of her days!
With confidence unbounded, fearless love
Elate, her fervent people waited gay,
Cheerful demanded the long threatened fleet,‡

* The Spanish West Indies.—T.

† The dominion of the house of Austria.—T.

‡ The Spanish Armada. Rapin says, that after proper measures had been taken, the enemy was expected with uncommon alacrity.—T.

And dashed the pride of Spain around their isle.
Nor ceased the British thunder here to rage:
The deep, reclaimed, obeyed its awful call;
In fire and smoke Iberian ports involved,
The trembling foe even to the centre shook
Of their new conquered world, and, skulking, stole
By veering winds their Indian treasure home.
Meantime, Peace, Plenty, Justice, Science, Arts,
With softer laurels crowned her happy reign.
"As yet uncircumscribed the regal power,
And wild and vague prerogative remained;
A wide voracious gulf, where swallowed oft
The helpless subject lay. This to reduce
To the just limit was my great effort.
"By means that evil seem to narrow man,
Superior Beings work their mystic will:
From storm and trouble thus a settled calm,
At last, effulgent, o'er Britannia smiled.
"The gathering tempest, Heaven-commissioned came,
Came in the prince,* who, drunk with flattery, dreamt
His vain pacific counsels ruled the world;
Though scorned abroad, bewildered in a maze
Of fruitless treaties; while at home enslaved,
And by a worthless crew insatiate drained,
He lost his people's confidence and love:
Irreparable loss! whence crowns become
An anxious burden. Years inglorious passed:
Triumphant Spain the vengeful draught enjoyed:
Abandoned Frederick† pined, and Raleigh bled.

* James I.—T.
† Elector Palatine, and who had been chosen King of

But nothing that to these internal broils,
That rancour, he began; while lawless sway
He, with his slavish Doctors, tried to rear
On metaphysic,* on enchanted ground,
And all the mazy quibbles of the schools:
As if for one, and sometimes for the worst,
Heaven had mankind in vengeance only made.
Vain the pretence! not so the dire effect,
The fierce, the foolish discord† thence derived,
That tears the country still, by party rage
And ministerial clamour kept alive.
In action weak, and for the wordy war
Best fitted, faint this prince pursued his claim:
Content to teach the subject herd, how great,
How sacred he! how despicable they!
" But his unyielding son‡ these doctrines drank,
With all a bigot's rage; (who never damps
By reasoning his fire) and what they taught,
Warm, and tenacious, into practice pushed.
Senates, in vain, their kind restraint applied:
The more they struggled to support the laws,
His justice-dreading ministers the more
Drove him beyond their bounds. Tired with the check
Of faithful love, and with the flattery pleased
Of false designing guilt, the fountain§ he

Bohemia, but was stripped of all his dominions and dignities by the Emperor Ferdinand, while James the First, his father-in-law, being amused from time to time, endeavoured to mediate a peace.—T.

* The monstrous and till then unheard-of doctrines of divine indefeasible hereditary right, passive obedience, &c. —T.

† The parties of Whig and Tory.—T.

‡ Charles I.—T.

§ Parliaments.—T.

Of public wisdom and of justice shut.
Wide mourned the land. Straight to the voted aid
Free, cordial, large, of never failing source,
The illegal imposition followed harsh,
With execration given, or ruthless squeezed
From an insulted people, by a band
Of the worst ruffians, those of tyrant power.
Oppression walked at large, and poured abroad
Her unrelenting train: informers, spies,
Bloodhounds, that sturdy freedom to the grave
Pursue; projectors of aggrieving schemes,
Commerce to load for unprotected seas,*
To sell the starving many to the few,†
And drain a thousand ways the exhausted land.
Even from that place, whence healing peace should flow,
And Gospel truth, inhuman bigots shed
Their poison‡ round; and on the venal bench,
Instead of justice, party held the scale,
And violence the sword. Afflicted years,
Too patient, felt at last their vengeance full.
"Mid the low murmurs of submissive fear
And mingled rage, my Hampden raised his voice,
And to the laws appealed; the laws no more
In judgment sat, behoved some other ear.
When instant from the keen resentive North,
By long oppression, by religion roused,
The guardian army came. Beneath its wing

* Ship-money.—T. † Monopolies.—T.

‡ The raging High-Church sermons of these times, inspiring at once a spirit of slavish submission to the court, and of bitter persecution against those whom they call Church and State Puritans.—T

Was called, though meant to furnish hostile aid,
The more than Roman senate. There a flame
Broke out, that cleared, consumed, renewed the land.
In deep emotion hurled, nor Greece, nor Rome,
Indignant bursting from a tyrant's chain,
While, full of me, each agitated soul
Strung every nerve and flamed in every eye,
Had e'er beheld such light and heat combined!
Such heads and hearts! such dreadful zeal, led on
By calm majestic wisdom, taught its course
What nuisance to devour; such wisdom fired
With unabating zeal, and aimed sincere
To clear the weedy state, restore the laws,
And for the future to secure their sway.
"This then the purpose of my mildest sons.
But man is blind. A nation once inflamed
(Chief, should the breath of factious fury blow,
With the wild rage of mad enthusiast swelled)
Not easy cools again. From breast to breast,
From eye to eye, the kindling passions mix
In heightened blaze; and, ever wise and just,
High Heaven to gracious ends directs the storm.
Thus in one conflagration Britain wrapt,
And by Confusion's lawless sons despoiled,
King, Lords, and Commons, thundering to the ground,
Successive, rushed—Lo! from their ashes rose,
Gay beaming radiant youth, the Phœnix State.*
"The grievous yoke of vassalage, the yoke
Of private life, lay by those flames dissolved;
And, from the wasteful, the luxurious king,†

* At the Restoration.—T. † Charles II.—T.

Was purchased that* which taught the young to bend.
Stronger restored, the Commons taxed the whole,
And built on that eternal rock their power.
The Crown, of its hereditary wealth
Despoiled, on senates more dependent grew,
And they more frequent, more assured. Yet lived,
And in full vigour spread that bitter root,
The passive doctrines, by their patrons first,
Opposed ferocious, when they touch themselves.
"This wild delusive cant; the rash cabal
Of hungry courtiers, ravenous for prey;
The bigot, restless in a double chain
To bind anew the land; the constant need
Of finding faithless means, of shifting forms,
And flattering senates, to supply his waste;
These tore some moments from the careless prince,
And in his breast awaked the kindred plan.
By dangerous softness long he mined his way;
By subtle arts, dissimulation deep;
By sharing what corruption showered, profuse;
By breathing wide the gay licentious plague,
And pleasing manners, fitted to deceive.
"At last subsided the delirious joy,
On whose high billow, from the saintly reign,
The nation drove too far. A pensioned king,
Against his country bribed by Gallic gold;
The port† pernicious sold, the Scylla since
And fell Charybdis of the British seas;
Freedom attacked abroad,‡ with surer blow

* Court of Wards.—T. † Dunkirk.—T.
‡ The war in conjunction with France, against the Dutch. —T.

To cut it off at home; the saviour league*
Of Europe broke; the progress even advanced
Of universal sway,† which to reduce
Such seas of blood and treasure Britain cost;
The millions, by a generous people given,
Or squandered vile, or to corrupt, disgrace,
And awe the land with forces‡ not their own,
Employed; the darling church herself betrayed;
All these, broad glaring, oped the general eye,
And waked my spirit, the resisting soul.
"Mild was, at first, and half ashamed, the check
Of senates, shook from the fantastic dream
Of absolute submission, tenets vile!
Which slaves would blush to own, and which, reduced
To practice, always honest nature shock.
Not even the mask removed, and the fierce front
Of tyranny disclosed; nor trampled laws;
Nor seized each badge of freedom§ through the land;
Nor Sidney bleeding for the unpublished page;
Nor on the bench avowed corruption placed,
And murderous rage itself, in Jefferies' form;
Nor endless acts of arbitrary power,
Cruel, and false, could raise the public arm.
Distrustful, scattered, of combining chiefs
Devoid, and dreading blind rapacious war,
The patient public turns not, till impelled
To the near verge of ruin. Hence I roused

* The Triple Alliance.—T. † Under Lewis XIV.—T.
‡ A standing army, raised without the consent of parliament.—T.
§ The charters of corporations.—T.

The bigot king,* and hurried fated on
His measures immature. But chief his zeal,
Out-flaming Rome herself, portentous scared
The troubled nation: Mary's horrid days
To fancy bleeding rose, and the dire glare
Of Smithfield lightened in its eyes anew.
Yet silence reigned. Each on another scowled
Rueful amazement, pressing down his rage:
As, mustering vengeance, the deep thunder frowns,
Awfully still, waiting the high command
To spring. Straight from his country, Europe, saved
To save Britannia, lo! my darling son,
Than hero more! the patriot of mankind!
Immortal Nassau came. I hushed the deep
By demons roused, and bade the listed winds,†
Still shifting as behoved, with various breath,
Waft the deliverer to the longing shore.
See! wide alive, the foaming channel‡ bright
With swelling sails, and all the pride of war,
Delightful view! when Justice draws the sword:
And mark! diffusing ardent soul around,

* James II.—T.

† The Prince of Orange, in his passage to England, though his fleet had been at first dispersed by a storm, was afterwards extremely favoured by several changes of wind.—T.

‡ Rapin, in his History of England.—The third of November the fleet entered the Channel, and lay by between Calais and Dover, to stay for the ships that were behind. Here the Prince called a council of war. It is easy to imagine what a glorious show the fleet made. Five or six hundred ships in so narrow a channel, and both the English and French shores covered with numberless spectators, are no common sight. For my part, who was then on board the fleet, I own it struck me extremely.—T.

And sweet contempt of death, my streaming flag,*
Even adverse navies† blessed the binding gale,
Kept down the glad acclaim, and silent joyed.
Arrived, the pomp, and not the waste of arms
His progress marked. The faint opposing host‡
For once, in yielding their best victory found,
And by desertion proved exalted faith:
While his the bloodless conquest of the heart,
Shouts without groan, and triumph without war.
"Then dawned the period destined to confine
The surge of wild prerogative, to raise
A mound restraining its imperious rage,
And bid the raving deep no farther flow.
Nor were, without that fence, the swallowed state
Better than Belgian plains without their dykes,
Sustaining weighty seas. This, often saved
By more than human hand, the public saw,
And seized the white-winged moment. Pleased§ to yield
Destructive power, a wise heroic prince‖
Even lent his aid—Thrice happy! did they know
Their happiness, Britannia's bounded kings.
What though not theirs the boast, in dungeon glooms,
To plunge bold freedom; or, to cheerless wilds,

* The Prince placed himself in the main body, carrying a flag with English colours, and their highnesses' arms surrounded with this motto, "The Protestant Religion and the Liberties of England;" and underneath the motto of the house of Nassau, "Je maintiendrai," I will maintain.—*Rapin.*—T.

† The English fleet.—T. ‡ The king's army.—T.

§ By the Bill of Rights and the Act of Succession.—T.

‖ William III.—T.

To drive him from the cordial face of friend;
Or fierce to strike him at the midnight hour,
By mandate blind, not justice, that delights
To dare the keenest eye of open day.
What though no glory to control the laws,
And make injurious will their only rule,
They deem it. What though, tools of wanton power,
Pestiferous armies swarm not at their call.
What though they give not a relentless crew
Of civil furies, proud oppression's fangs!
To tear at pleasure the dejected land,
With starving labour pampering idle waste.
To clothe the naked, feed the hungry, wipe
The guiltless tear from lone affliction's eye;
To raise hid merit, set the alluring light
Of virtue high to view; to nourish arts,
Direct the thunder of an injured state,
Make a whole glorious people sing for joy,
Bless humankind, and through the downward depth
Of future times to spread that better sun
Which lights up British soul: for deeds like these,
The dazzling fair career unbounded lies;
While (still superior bliss!) the dark abrupt
Is kindly barred, the precipice of ill.
O luxury divine! O poor to this,
Ye giddy glories of despotic thrones!
By this, by this indeed, is imaged Heaven,
By boundless good without the power of ill.
"And now behold! exalted as the cope
That swells immense o'er many-peopled earth,
And like it free, my fabric stands complete,
The palace of the laws. To the four heavens

Four gates impartial thrown, unceasing crowds,
With kings themselves the hearty peasant mixed,
Pour urgent in. And though to different ranks
Responsive place belongs, yet equal spreads
The sheltering roof o'er all; while plenty flows,
And glad contentment echoes round the whole.
Ye floods, descend! Ye winds, confirming, blow!
Nor outward tempest, nor corrosive time,
Nought but the felon undermining hand
Of dark Corruption, can its frame dissolve,
And lay the toil of ages in the dust."

THE PROSPECT;

BEING THE FIFTH PART OF

LIBERTY,

A POEM.

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PART V.

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LIBERTY.

PART V.—THE PROSPECT.

HERE interposing, as the Goddess paused;—
"O blest Britannia! in thy presence blest,
Thou guardian of mankind! whence spring, alone,
All human grandeur, happiness, and fame;
For toil, by thee protected, feels no pain;
The poor man's lot with milk and honey flows;
And, gilded with thy rays, even death looks gay.
Let other lands the potent blessings boast
Of more exalting suns. Let Asia's woods,
Untended, yield the vegetable fleece:
And let the little insect-artist form,
On higher life intent, its silken tomb.
Let wondering rocks, in radiant birth, disclose
The various tinctured children of the sun.
From the prone beam let more delicious fruits,
A flavour drink, that in one piercing taste
Bids each combine. Let Gallic vineyards burst
With floods of joy; with mild balsamic juice
The Tuscan olive. Let Arabia breathe
Her spicy gales, her vital gums distil.

Turbid with gold, let southern rivers flow;
And orient floods draw soft, o'er pearls, their
maze.
Let Afric vaunt her treasures; let Peru
Deep in her bowels her own ruin breed,
The yellow traitor that her bliss betrayed,—
Unequalled bliss——and to unequalled rage!
Yet nor the gorgeous East, nor golden South,
Nor, in full prime, that new discovered world,
Where flames the falling day, in wealth and praise,
Shall with Britannia vie; while, Goddess, she
Derives her praise from thee, her matchless charms.
Her hearty fruits the hand of freedom own;
And warm with culture, her thick clustering fields
Prolific teem. Eternal verdure crowns
Her meads; her gardens smile eternal spring.
She gives the hunter-horse, unquelled by toil,
Ardent, to rush into the rapid chase:
She, whitening o'er her downs, diffusive, pours
Unnumbered flocks: she weaves the fleecy robe,
That wraps the nations: she, to lusty droves,
The richest pasture spreads; and, hers, deep-wave
Autumnal seas of pleasing plenty round.
These her delights: and by no baneful herb,
No darting tiger, no grim lion's glare,
No fierce-descending wolf, no serpent rolled
In spires immense progressive o'er the land,
Disturbed. Enlivening these, add cities, full
Of wealth, of trade, of cheerful toiling crowds:
Add thriving towns; add villages and farms,
Innumerous sowed along the lively vale,
Where bold unrivalled peasants happy dwell:
Add ancient seats, with venerable oaks

Embosomed high, while kindred floods below
Wind through the mead; and those of modern hand,
More pompous, add, that splendid shine afar.
Need I her limpid lakes, her rivers name,
Where swarm the finny race? Thee, chief, O Thames!
On whose each tide, glad with returning sails,
Flows in the mingled harvest of mankind?
And thee, thou Severn, whose prodigious swell,
And waves, resounding, imitate the main?
Why need I name her deep capacious ports,
That point around the world? and why her seas?
All ocean is her own, and every land
To whom her ruling thunder ocean bears.
She too the mineral feeds: the obedient lead,
The warlike iron, nor the peaceful less,
Forming of life art-civilized the bond;
And that* the Tyrian merchant sought of old,
Not dreaming then of Britain's brighter fame.
She rears to freedom an undaunted race:
Compatriot zealous, hospitable, kind,
Hers the warm Cambrian: hers the lofty Scot,
To hardship tamed, active in arts and arms,
Fired with a restless, an impatient flame,
That leads him raptured where ambition calls:
And English merit hers; where meet, combined,
Whate'er high fancy, sound judicious thought,
An ample generous heart, undrooping soul,
And firm tenacious valour can bestow.
Great nurse of fruits, of flocks, of commerce, she!
Great nurse of men! by thee, O Goddess, taught,
Her old renown I trace, disclose her source

* Tin.—T.

Of wealth, of grandeur, and to Britons sing
A strain the Muses never touched before."
"But how shall this thy mighty kingdom stand?
On what unyielding base? how finished shine?"
At this her eye, collecting all its fire,
Beamed more than human; and her awful voice,
Majestic thus she raised: "To Britons bear
This closing strain, and with intenser note
Loud let it sound in their awakened ear:
"On virtue can alone my kingdom stand,
On public virtue, every virtue joined.
For, lost this social cement of mankind,
The greatest empires, by scarce-felt degrees,
Will moulder soft away; till, tottering loose,
They, prone at last, to total ruin rush.
Unblessed by virtue, government a league
Becomes, a circling junto of the great,
To rob by law; religion mild, a yoke
To tame the stooping soul, a trick of state
To mask their rapine, and to share the prey.
What are, without it, senates, save a face
Of consultation deep and reason free,
While the determined voice and heart are sold?
What boasted freedom, save a sounding name?
And what election, but a market vile
Of slaves self-bartered? Virtue! without thee,
There is no ruling eye, no nerve, in states;
War has no vigour, and no safety peace:
Even justice warps to party, laws oppress,
Wide through the land their weak protection fails,
First broke the balance, and then scorned the sword.
Thus nations sink, society dissolves;

Rapine and guile and violence break loose,
Everting life, and turning love to gall;
Man hates the face of man, and Indian woods
And Libya's hissing sands to him are tame.
"By those three virtues be the frame sustained
Of British freedom; independent life;
Integrity in office; and, o'er all
Supreme, a passion for the commonweal.
"Hail! Independence, hail! Heaven's next best gift,
To that of life and an immortal soul!
The life of life! that to the banquet high
And sober meal gives taste; to the bowed roof
Fair-dreamed repose, and to the cottage charms.
Of public freedom, hail, thou secret source!
Whose streams, from every quarter confluent, form
My better Nile, that nurses human life.
By rills from thee deduced, irriguous, fed,
The private field looks gay, with nature's wealth
Abundant flows, and blooms with each delight
That nature craves. Its happy master there,
The only freeman, walks his pleasing round:
Sweet-featured peace attending; fearless truth;
Firm resolution; goodness, blessing all
That can rejoice; contentment, surest friend;
And, still fresh stores from nature's book derived,
Philosophy, companion ever new.
These cheer his rural, and sustain or fire,
When into action called, his busy hours.
Meantime true judging moderate desires,
Economy and taste, combined, direct
His clear affairs, and from debauching fiends

Secure his little kingdom. Nor can those
Whom fortune heaps, without these virtues, real
That truce with pain, that animated ease,
That self-enjoyment springing from within,
That independence, active or retired,
Which make the soundest bliss of man below:
But, lost beneath the rubbish of their means,
And drained by wants to nature all unknown,
A wandering, tasteless, gaily wretched train,
Though rich, are beggars, and though noble, slaves.
"Lo! damned to wealth, at what a gross expense
They purchase disappointment, pain, and shame.
Instead of hearty hospitable cheer,
See! how the hall with brutal riot flows;
While in the foaming flood, fermenting, steeped,
The country maddens into party rage.
Mark! those disgraceful piles of wood and stone;
Those parks and gardens, where, his haunts betrimmed,
And nature by presumptuous art oppressed,
The woodland genius mourns. See! the full board
That steams disgust, and bowls that give no joy;
No truth invited there, to feed the mind;
Nor wit, the wine-rejoicing reason quaffs.
Hark! how the dome with insolence rosounds,
With those retained by vanity to scare
Repose and friends. To tyrant Fashion, mark!
The costly worship paid, to the broad gaze
Of fools. From still delusive day to day,
Led an eternal round of lying hope,
See! self-abandoned, how they roam adrift,
Dashed o'er the town, a miserable wreck!

Then to adore some warbling eunuch turned,
With Midas' ears they crowd; or to the buzz
Of masquerade unblushing: or, to show
Their scorn of nature, at the tragic scene
They mirthful sit, or prove the comic true.
But, chief, behold! around the rattling board,
The civil robbers ranged; and even the fair,
The tender fair, each sweetness laid aside,
As fierce for plunder as all-licensed troops
In some sacked city. Thus dissolved their wealth,
Without one generous luxury dissolved,
Or quartered on it many a needless want,
At the thronged levee bends the venal tribe;
With fair but faithless smiles each varnished o'er,
Each smooth as those that mutually deceive,
And for their falsehood each despising each;
Till shook their patron by the wintry winds,
Wide flies the withered shower, and leaves him bare.
O far superior Afric's sable sons,
By merchant pilfered, to these willing slaves!
And rich, as unsqueezed favourite, to them,
Is he who can his virtue boast alone!
"Britons! be firm!—nor let corruption sly
Twine round your heart indissoluble chains!
The steel of Brutus burst the grosser bonds
By Cæsar cast o'er Rome; but still remained
The soft enchanting fetters of the mind;
And other Cæsars rose. Determined, hold
Your independence; for, that once destroyed,
Unfounded, Freedom is a morning dream,
That flits aerial from the spreading eye.
"Forbid it, Heaven! that ever I need urge

Integrity in office on my sons!
Inculcate common honour——not to rob——
And whom?—the gracious, the confiding hand,
That lavishly rewards? the toiling poor,
Whose cup with many a bitter drop is mixed?
The guardian public? every face they see,
And every friend? nay, in effect themselves?
As in familiar life, the villain's fate
Admits no cure; so, when a desperate age
At this arrives, I the devoted race
Indignant spurn, and hopeless soar away.

"But, ah too little known to modern times!
Be not the noblest passion passed unsung;
That ray peculiar, from unbounded love
Effused, which kindles the heroic soul;
Devotion to the public. Glorious flame!
Celestial ardour! in what unknown worlds,
Profusely scattered through the blue immense,
Hast thou been blessing myriads, since in Rome,
Old virtuous Rome, so many deathless names
From thee their lustre drew? since, taught by thee,
Their poverty put splendour to the blush,
Pain grew luxurious, and even death delight?
O wilt thou ne'er, in thy long period, look,
With blaze direct, on this my last retreat?

"'Tis not enough, from self right understood
Reflected, that thy rays inflame the heart:
Though virtue not disdains appeals to self,
Dreads not the trial; all her joys are true,
Nor is there any real joy save hers.
Far less the tepid, the declaiming race,
Foes to corruption, to its wages friends,

Or those whom private passions, for a while,
Beneath my standard list; can they suffice
To raise and fix the glory of my reign?
"An active flood of universal love
Must swell the breast. First, in effusion wide,
The restless spirit roves creation round,
And seizes every being: stronger then
It tends to life, whate'er the kindred search
Of bliss allies: then, more collected still,
It urges human kind; a passion grown,
At last, the central parent public calls
Its utmost effort forth, awakes each sense,
The comely, grand, and tender. Without this,
This awful pant, shook from sublimer powers
Than those of self, this Heaven-infused delight,
This moral gravitation, rushing prone
To press the public good, my system soon,
Traverse, to several selfish centres drawn,
Will reel to ruin: while for ever shut
Stand the bright portals of desponding fame.
"From sordid self shoot up no shining deeds,
None of those ancient lights, that gladden earth,
Give grace to being, and arouse the brave
To just ambition, virtue's quickening fire!
Life tedious grows, an idly bustling round,
Filled up with actions animal and mean,
A dull gazette! The impatient reader scorns
The poor historic page; till kindly comes
Oblivion, and redeems a people's shame.
Not so the times when, emulation-stung,
Greece shone in genius, science, and in arts,
And Rome in virtues dreadful to be told!
To live was glory then! and charmed mankind,

Through the deep periods of devolving time,
Those, raptured, copy; these, astonished, read.
"True, a corrupted state, with every vice
And every meanness foul, this passion damps.
Who can, unshocked, behold the cruel eye?
The pale inveigling smile? the ruffian front?
The wretch abandoned to relentless self,
Equally vile if miser or profuse?
Powers not of God, assiduous to corrupt?
The fell deputed tyrant, who devours
The poor and weak,* at distance from redress?
Delirious faction bellowing loud my name?
The false fair-seeming patriot's hollow boast?
A race resolved on bondage, fierce for chains,
My sacred rights a merchandize alone
Esteeming, and to work their feeder's will
By deeds, a horror to mankind, prepared,
As were the dregs of Romulus of old?
Who these indeed can undetesting see?—
But who unpitying? to the generous eye
Distress is virtue; and, though self-betrayed,
A people struggling with their fate must rouse
The hero's throb. Nor can a land, at once,
Be lost to virtue quite. How glorious then!
Fit luxury for gods! to save the good,
Protect the feeble, dash bold vice aside,
Depress the wicked, and restore the frail.
Posterity, besides,—the young are pure,

* Lord Molesworth, in his account of Denmark, says, "It is observed, that in limited monarchies and commonwealths, a neighbourhood to the seat of the government is advantageous to the subjects; whilst the distant provinces are less thriving, and more liable to oppression."—T.

And sons may tinge their father's cheek with
shame.
"Should then the times arrive (which Heaven
avert!)
That Britons bend unnerved, not by the force
Of arms, more generous and more manly, quelled,
But by corruption's soul-dejecting arts,
Arts impudent and gross! by their own gold,
In part bestowed, to bribe them to give all;
With party raging, or immersed in sloth,
Should they Britannia's well fought laurels yield
To slily conquering Gaul; even from her brow
Let her own naval oak be basely torn,
By such as tremble at the stiffening gale,
And nerveless sink while others sing rejoiced.
Or (darker prospect! scarce one gleam behind
Disclosing) should the broad corruptive plague
Breathe from the city to the farthest hut,
That sits serene within the forest shade;
The fevered people fire, inflame their wants,
And their luxurious thirst, so gathering rage,
That, were a buyer found, they stand prepared
To sell their birthright for a cooling draught.
Should shameless pens for plain corruption plead;
The hired assassins of the commonweal!
Deemed the declaiming rant of Greece and Rome,
Should public virtue grow the public scoff,
Till private, failing, staggers through the land:
Till round the city loose mechanic want,
Dire-prowling nightly, makes the cheerful haunts
Of men more hideous than Numidian wilds,
Nor from its fury sleeps the vale in peace;
And murders, horrors, perjuries abound:

Nay, till to lowest deeds the highest stoop;
The rich, like starving wretches, thirst for gold;
And those, on whom the vernal showers of Heaven
All-bounteous fall, and that prime lot bestow,
A power to live to nature and themselves,
In sick attendance wear their anxious days,
With fortune, joyless, and with honours, mean.
Meantime, perhaps, profusion flows around,
The waste of war, without the works of peace;
No mark of millions in the gulf absorbed
Of uncreating vice; none but the rage
Of roused corruption still demanding more.
That very portion, which (by faithful skill
Employed) might make the smiling public rear
Her ornamented head, drilled through the hands
Of mercenary tools, serves but to nurse
A locust band within, and in the bud
Leaves starved each work of dignity and use.
"I paint the worst. But should these times arrive,
If any nobler passion yet remain,
Let all my sons all parties fling aside,
Despise their nonsense, and together join;
Let worth and virtue scorning low despair,
Exerted full, from every quarter shine,
Commixed in heightened blaze. Light flashed to light,
Moral, or intellectual, more intense
By giving glows. As on pure winter's eve,
Gradual, the stars effulge; fainter, at first,
They, straggling, rise; but when the radiant host,
In thick profusion poured, shine out immense,
Each casting vivid influence on each,

From pole to pole a glittering deluge plays,
And worlds above rejoice, and men below.
" But why to Britons this superfluous strain?—
Good nature, honest truth even somewhat blunt,
Of crooked baseness an indignant scorn,
A zeal unyielding in their country's cause,
And ready bounty, wont to dwell with them—
Nor only wont—wide o'er the land diffused,
In many a blest retirement still they dwell.
" To softer prospect turn we now the view,
To laurelled science, arts, and public works,
That lend my finished fabric comely pride,
Grandeur and grace. Of sullen genius he!
Cursed by the Muses! by the Graces loathed!
Who deems beneath the public's high regard
These last enlivening touches of my reign.
However puffed with power, and gorged with wealth,
A nation be; let trade enormous rise,
Let East and South their mingled treasure pour,
Till, swelled impetuous, the corrupting flood
Burst o'er the city and devour the land:
Yet these neglected, these recording arts,
Wealth rots, a nuisance; and, oblivious sunk,
That nation must another Carthage lie.
If not by them, on monumental brass,
On sculptured marble, on the deathless page,
Impressed, renown had left no trace behind:
In vain, to future times, the sage had thought,
The legislator planned, the hero found
A beauteous death, the patriot toiled in vain.
The awarders they of Fame's immortal wreath,
They rouse ambition, they the mind exalt,

Give great ideas, lovely forms infuse,
Delight the general eye, and, dressed by them,
The moral Venus glows with double charms.
" Science, my close associate, still attends
Where'er I go. Sometimes, in simple guise,
She walks the furrow with the consul-swain.
Whispering unlettered wisdom to the heart,
Direct; or, sometimes, in the pompous robe
Of fancy dressed, she charms Athenian wits,
And a whole sapient city round her burns.
Then o'er her brow Minerva's terrors nod:
With Xenophon, sometimes, in dire extremes,
She breathes deliberate soul, and makes retreat*
Unequalled glory: with the Theban sage,
Epaminondas, first and best of men!
Sometimes she bids the deep-embattled host,
Above the vulgar reach, resistless formed,
March to sure conquest—never gained before!†
Nor on the treacherous seas of giddy state
Unskilful she: when the triumphant tide
Of high-swoln empire wears one boundless smile,
And the gale tempts to new pursuits of fame,
Sometimes, with Scipio, she collects her sail,
And seeks the blissful shore of rural ease,
Where, but the Aonian maids, no sirens sing;
Or should the deep-brewed tempest muttering rise,

* The famous Retreat of the Ten Thousand was chiefly conducted by Xenophon.—T.

† Epaminondas, after having beat the Lacedemonians and their allies, in the battle of Leuctra, made an incursion, at the head of a powerful army, into Laconia. It was now six hundred years since the Dorians had possessed this country, and in all that time the face of an enemy had not been seen within their territories.—*Plutarch in Agesilaus.*—T.

While rocks and shoals perfidious lurk around,
With Tully she her wide-reviving light
To senates holds, a Catiline confounds,
And saves awhile from Cæsar sinking Rome.
Such the kind power, whose piercing eye dissolves
Each mental fetter, and sets reason free;
For me inspiring an enlightened zeal,
The more tenacious as the more convinced
How happy freemen, and how wretched slaves.
To Britons not unknown, to Britons full
The Goddess spreads her stores, the secret soul
That quickens trade, the breath unseen that wafts
To them the treasures of a balanced world.
But finer arts (save what the Muse has sung
In daring flight, above all modern wing,)
Neglected droop the head; and public works,
Broke by corruption into private gain,
Not ornament, disgrace; not serve, destroy.
"Shall Britons, by their own joint wisdom ruled
Beneath one Royal Head, whose vital power
Connects, enlivens, and exerts the whole;
In finer arts, and public works, shall they
To Gallia yield? yield to a land that bends
Depressed, and broke, beneath the will of one?
Of one who, should the unkingly thirst of gold,
Or tyrant passions, or ambition, prompt,
Calls locust-armies o'er the blasted land:
Drains from its thirsty bounds the springs of wealth,
His own insatiate reservoir to fill:
To the lone desert patriot-merit frowns,
Or into dungeons arts, when they, their chains,
Indignant, bursting, for their nobler works

All other license scorn but truth's and mine.
Oh shame to think! shall Britons, in the field
Unconquered still, the better laurel lose?
Even in that monarch's reign,* who vainly dreamt,
By giddy power, betrayed, and flattered pride,
To grasp unbounded sway; while, swarming round,
His armies dared all Europe to the field;
To hostile hands while treasure flowed profuse,
And, that great source of treasure, subjects' blood,
Inhuman squandered, sickened every land;
From Britain, chief, while my superior sons,
In vengeance rushing, dashed his idle hopes,
And bade his agonizing heart be low:
Even then, as in the golden calm of peace,
What public works, at home, what arts arose!
What various science shone! what genius glowed!
"'Tis not for me to paint, diffusive shot
O'er fair extents of land, the shining road;
The flood-compelling arch; the long canal,†
Through mountains piercing and uniting seas;
The dome‡ resounding sweet with infant joy,
From famine saved, or cruel-handed shame;
And that‡ where valour counts his noble scars;
The land where social pleasure loves to dwell,
Of the fierce demon, Gothic duel, freed;
The robber from his farthest forest chased;
The turbid city cleared, and, by degrees,
Into sure peace, the best police, refined,
Magnificence, and grace, and decent joy.
Let Gallic bards record, how honoured arts,
And science, by despotic bounty blessed,

* Lewis XIV.—T † The Canal of Languedoc.—T.
‡ The hospitals for foundlings and invalids.—T.

At distance flourished from my parent-eye.
Restoring ancient taste, how Boileau rose:
How the big Roman soul shook, in Corneille,
The trembling stage. In elegant Racine,
How the more powerful though more humble voice
Of nature-painting Greece, resistless, breathed
The whole awakened heart. How Moliere's scene,
Chastised and regular, with well judged wit,
Not scattered wild, and native humour, graced,
Was life itself. To public honours raised,
How learning in warm seminaries* spread;
And, more for glory than the small reward,
How emulation strove. How their pure tongue
Almost obtained what was denied their arms.
From Rome, awhile, how Painting, courted long,
With Poussin came; ancient design, that lifts
A fairer front, and looks another soul.
How the kind art,† that, of unvalued price,
The famed and only picture, easy, gives,
Refined her touch, and, through the shadowed piece,
All the live spirit of the painter poured.
Coyest of arts, how Sculpture northward deigned
A look, and bade her Girardon arise.
How lavish grandeur blazed; the barren waste,
Astonished, saw the sudden palace swell,
And fountains spout amid its arid shades.
For leagues, bright vistas opening to the view,
How forests in majestic gardens smiled.

* The Academies of Sciences, of the Belles Lettres, and of Painting.—T.

† Engraving.—T.

How menial arts, by their gay sisters taught,
Wove the deep flower, the blooming foliage trained
In joyous figures o'er the silky lawn,
The palace cheered, illumed the storied wall,
And with the pencil vied the glowing loom.*
"These laurels, Lewis, by the droppings raised
Of thy profusion, its dishonour shade,
And, green through future times, shall bind thy brow;
While the vain honours of perfidious war
Wither abhorred, or in oblivion lost.
With what prevailing vigour had they shot,
And stole a deeper root, by the full tide
Of war-sunk millions fed? Superior still,
How had they branched luxuriant to the skies,
In Britain planted by the potent juice
Of Freedom swelled? Forced is the bloom of arts.
A false uncertain spring, when bounty gives,
Weak without me, a transitory gleam.
Fair shine the slippery days, enticing skies
Of favour smile, and courtly breezes blow;
Till arts, betrayed, trust to the flattering air
Their tender blossom: then malignant rise
The blights of Envy, of those insect clouds,
That, blasting merit, often cover courts:
Nay, should, perchance, some kind Mæcenas aid
The doubtful beamings of his prince's soul,
His wavering ardour fix, and unconfined
Diffuse his warm beneficence around;
Yet death, at last, and wintry tyrants come,
Each sprig of genius killing at the root.
But when with me imperial bounty joins,

* The tapestry of the Gobelins.—T.

Wide o'er the public blows eternal spring;
While mingled autumn every harvest pours
Of every land; whate'er Invention, Art,
Creating Toil, and Nature can produce."
Here ceased the Goddess; and her ardent wings
Dipped in the colours of the heavenly bow,
Stood waving radiance round, for sudden flight
Prepared, when thus, impatient, burst my prayer:
"O forming light of life! O better sun!
Sun of mankind! by whom the cloudy north,
Sublimed, not envies Languedocian skies,
That, unstained ether all, diffusive smile:
When shall we call these ancient laurels ours?
And when thy work complete?" Straight with her hand,
Celestial red, she touched my darkened eyes.
As at the touch of day the shades dissolve,
So quick, methought, the misty circle cleared,
That dims the dawn of being here below:
The future shone disclosed, and, in long view,
Bright rising eras instant rushed to light.
"They come! great Goddess! I the times behold!
The times our fathers, in the bloody field,
Have earned so dear, and, not with less renown,
In the warm struggles of the senate fight.
The times I see! whose glory to supply,
For toiling ages, Commerce round the world
Has winged unnumbered sails, and from each land
Materials heaped, that, well employed, with Rome
Might vie our grandeur, and with Greece our art.
"Lo! Princes I behold! contriving still,
And still conducting firm some brave design;

Kings! that the narrow joyless circle scorn,
Burst the blockade of false designing men,
Of treacherous smiles, of adulation fell,
And of the blinding clouds around them thrown:
Their court rejoicing millions; Worth, alone,
And Virtue dear to them; their best delight,
In just proportion, to give general joy;
Their jealous care thy kingdom to maintain;
The public glory theirs; unsparing love
Their endless treasure; and their deeds their praise.
With thee they work. Nought can resist your force:
Life feels it quickening in her dark retreats:
Strong spread the blooms of Genius, Science, Art;
His bashful bounds disclosing Merit breaks;
And, big with fruits of glory, Virtue blows
Expansive o'er the land. Another race
Of generous youth, of patriot sires, I see!
Not those vain insects fluttering in the blaze
Of court, and ball, and play; those venal souls,
Corruption's veteran unrelenting bands,
That, to their vices slaves, can ne'er be free.
"I see the fountains purged! whence life derives
A clear or turbid flow; see the young mind
Not fed impure by chance, by flattery fooled,
Or by scholastic jargon bloated proud,
But filled and nourished by the light of truth.
Then, beamed through fancy the refining ray,
And pouring on the heart, the passions feel
At once informing light and moving flame;
Till moral, public, graceful action crowns

The whole. Behold! the fair contention glows,
In all that mind or body can adorn,
And form to life. Instead of barren heads,
Barbarian pedants, wrangling sons of pride,
And truth-perplexing metaphysic wits,
Men, patriots, chiefs, and citizens are formed.
"Lo! Justice, like the liberal light of Heaven,
Unpurchased shines on all; and from her beam,
Appalling guilt, retire the savage crew,
That prowl amid the darkness they themselves
Have thrown around the laws. Oppression grieves;
See! how her legal furies bite the lip,
While Yorkes and Talbots their deep snares detect,
And seize swift justice through the clouds they raise.
"See! social Labour lifts his guarded head,
And men not yield to government in vain.
From the sure land is rooted ruffian force,
And the lewd nurse of villains, idle waste;
Lo! razed their haunts, down dashed their maddening bowl,
A nation's poison! beauteous order reigns!
Manly submission, unimposing toil,
Trade without guile, civility that marks
From the foul herd of brutal slaves, thy sons,
And fearless peace. Or should affronting war
To slow but dreadful vengeance rouse the just,
Unfailing fields of freemen I behold!
That know, with their own proper arm, to guard
Their own blest isle against a leaguing world.
Despairing Gaul her boiling youth restrains,
Dissolved her dream of universal sway:

The winds and seas are Britain's wide domain;
And not a sail, but by permission, spreads.
"Lo! swarming southward on rejoicing suns,
Gay colonies extend; the calm retreat
Of undeserved distress, the better home
Of those whom bigots chase from foreign lands.
Not built on rapine, servitude, and woe,
And in their turn some petty tyrant's prey;
But, bound by social Freedom, firm they rise;
Such as, of late, an Oglethorpe has formed,
And, crowding round, the charmed Savannah sees.*
"Horrid with want and misery, no more
Our streets the tender passenger afflict.
Nor shivering age, nor sickness without friend,
Or home, or bed to bear his burning load,
Nor agonizing infant, that ne'er earned
Its guiltless pangs, I see! The stores, profuse,
Which British bounty has to these assigned,
No more the sacrilegious riot swell
Of cannibal devourers! right applied,
No starving wretch the land of freedom stains:
If poor, employment finds; if old, demands,
If sick, if maimed, his miserable due;
And will, if young, repay the fondest care.
Sweet sets the sun of stormy life; and sweet
The morning shines, in Mercy's dews arrayed.
Lo! how they rise! these families of Heaven!
That! chief,† (but why—ye bigots!—why so late?)

* Georgia, the last of the original thirteen United States, had recently been colonized under the auspices of General Oglethorpe.

† The Foundling Hospital.—T.

Where blooms and warbles glad a rising age;
What smiles of praise! and, while their song as-
The listening seraph lays his lute aside. [cends,
"Hark! the gay muses raise a nobler strain,
With active nature, warm impassioned truth,
Engaging fable, lucid order, notes
Of various string, and heart-felt image filled.
Behold! I see the dread delightful school
Of tempered passions, and of polished life,
Restored: behold! the well dissembled scene
Calls from embellished eyes the lovely tear,
Or lights up mirth in modest cheeks again.
Lo! vanished monster-land. Lo! driven away
Those that Apollo's sacred walks profane:
Their wild creation scattered, where a world
Unknown to nature, Chaos more confused,
O'er the brute scene its Ouran-Outangs pours;*
Detested forms! that, on the mind impressed,
Corrupt, confound, and barbarize an age.
"Behold! all thine again the Sister-Arts,
Thy graces they, knit in harmonious dance.
Nursed by the treasure from a nation drained
Their works to purchase, they to nobler rouse
Their untamed genius, their unfettered thought;
Of pompous tyrants, and of dreaming monks,
The gaudy tools, and prisoners, no more.
"Lo! numerous domes a Burlington† confess:

* A creature which, of all brutes, most resembles man.—*See Dr. Tyson's Treatise on this animal.*—T.

† Richard Boyle, third Earl of Burlington, K.G., commemorated in Pope's verse,—

"Who plants like Bathurst, or who builds like Boyle."

He was the architect of Chiswick and of Burlington House, and died, without male issue, 1753.

For kings and senates fit, the palace see!
The temple breathing a religious awe;
Even framed with elegance the plain retreat,
The private dwelling. Certain in his aim,
Taste, never idly working, saves expense.
"See! sylvan scenes, where Art alone pretends
To dress her mistress, and disclose her charms:
Such as a Pope in miniature has shown;*
A Bathurst o'er the widening forest† spreads;
And such as form a Richmond, Chiswick, Stowe.
"August, around, what public works I see!
Lo! stately streets, lo! squares that court the breeze,
In spite of those to whom pertains the care,
Ingulfing more than founded Roman ways,
Lo! rayed from cities o'er the brightened land,
Connecting sea to sea, the solid road.
Lo! the proud arch (no vile exactor's stand)
With easy sweep bestrides the chasing flood.
See! long canals, and deepened rivers join
Each part with each, and with the circling main
The whole enlivened isle. Lo! ports expand,
Free as the winds and waves, their sheltering arms.
Lo! streaming comfort o'er the troubled deep,
On every pointed coast the lighthouse towers;
And, by the broad imperious mole repelled,
Hark! how the baffled storm indignant roars."

* At his Twickenham Villa.—T.

† Okely woods, near Cirencester.—T. Planted by Allen, first Earl Bathurst, the friend of Swift, Atterbury, Pope, Addison, and most other distinguished men of that day; he died, æt. 91, 1775.

As thick to view these varied wonders rose,
Shook all my soul with transport, unassured,
The Vision broke; and, on my waking eye,
Rushed the still ruins of dejected Rome.

JUVENILE POEMS.

The following fourteen pieces were first published in the Aldine Edition of Thomson. They were obtained by Sir H. Nicolas from a manuscript in the poet's own writing, containing as many of his early poems as he could recollect, which he presented to Lord George Graham.

I.

A POETICAL EPISTLE TO SIR WILLIAM BENNET, BART. OF GRUBBAT.*

MY trembling muse your honour does address,
That it's a bold attempt most humbly I confess;
If you'll encourage her young fagging flight,
She'll upwards soar and mount Parnassus' height.
If little things with great may be compared,

* This was written at a very early period of Thomson's life, probably in his fourteenth year, and the reason for inserting it is, that the first productions of genius are objects of rational curiosity.

In Rome it so with the divine Virgil fared;
The tuneful bard Augustus did inspire,
Made his great genius flash poetic fire;
But if upon my flight your honour frowns,
The muse folds up her wings, and dying—justice owns.

II.

LISY'S PARTING WITH HER CAT.

THE dreadful hour with leaden pace approached,
Lashed fiercely on by unrelenting fate,
When Lisy* and her bosom Cat must part:
For now, to school and pensive needle doomed,
She's banished from her childhood's undashed joy,
And all the pleasing intercourse she kept
With her gray comrade, which has often soothed
Her tender moments, while the world around
Glowed with ambition, business, and vice,
Or lay dissolved in sleep's delicious arms;
And from their dewy orbs the conscious stars
Shed on their friendship influence benign.
But see where mournful Puss, advancing, stood
With outstretched tail, casts looks of anxious woe
On melting Lisy, in whose eye the tear
Stood tremulous, and thus would fain have said,

* Thomson's second and favourite sister. See Memoir, p. cxxxv.

If nature had not tied her struggling tongue:
"Unkind, O! who shall now with fattening milk,
With flesh, with bread, and fish beloved, and meat,
Regale my taste? and at the cheerful fire,
Ah, who shall bask me in their downy lap?
Who shall invite me to the bed, and throw
The bedclothes o'er me in the winter night,
When Eurus roars? Beneath whose soothing hand
Soft shall I purr? But now, when Lisy's gone,
What is the dull officious world to me?
I loathe the thoughts of life:" thus plained the Cat,
While Lisy felt, by sympathetic touch,
These anxious thoughts that in her mind revolved,
And casting on her a desponding look,
She snatched her in her arms with eager grief,
And mewing, thus began:—"O Cat beloved!
Thou dear companion of my tender years!
Joy of my youth! that oft hast licked my hands
With velvet tongue ne'er stained by mouse's blood.
Oh, gentle Cat! how shall I part with thee?
How dead and heavy will the moments pass
When you are not in my delighted eye,
With Cubi playing, or your flying tail.
How harshly will the softest muslin feel,
And all the silk of schools, while I no more
Have your sleek skin to soothe my softened sense?
How shall I eat while you are not beside
To share the bit? How shall I ever sleep
While I no more your lulling murmurs hear?
Yet we must part—so rigid fate decrees—
But never shall your loved idea, dear,
Part from my soul, and when I first can mark
The embroidered figure on the snowy lawn,

Your image shall my needle keen employ.
Hark! now I'm called away! O direful sound!
I come—I come, but first I charge you all—
You—you—and you, particularly you,
O, Mary, Mary,* feed her with the best,
Repose her nightly in the warmest couch,
And be a Lisy to her!"—Having said,
She sat her down, and with her head across,
Rushed to the evil which she could not shun,
While a sad mew went knelling to her heart!

III.

ON MAY.

AMONG the changing months, May stands confest
The sweetest, and in fairest colours drest!
Soft as the breeze that fans the smiling field;
Sweet as the breath that opening roses yield;
Fair as the colour lavish Nature paints
On virgin flowers free from unodorous taints!—
To rural scenes thou tempt'st the busy crowd,
Who, in each grove, thy praises sing aloud!
The blooming belles and shallow beaux, strange sight!
Turn nymphs and swains, and in their sports delight.

* The poet's youngest sister. See Memoir, p. cxxxvii.

IV.

THE MORNING IN THE COUNTRY.

WHEN from the opening chambers of the east
The morning springs, in thousand liveries drest,
The early larks their morning tribute pay,
And, in shrill notes, salute the blooming day.
Refreshèd fields with pearly dew do shine,
And tender blades therewith their tops incline.
Their painted leaves the unblown flowers expand,
And with their odorous breath perfume the land.
The crowing cock and chattering hen awakes
Dull sleepy clowns, who know the morning breaks.
The herd his plaid around his shoulders throws,
Grasps his dear crook, calls on his dog, and goes
Around the fold: he walks with careful pace,
And fallen clods sets in their wonted place;
Then opes the door, unfolds his fleecy care,
And gladly sees them crop their morning fare!
Down upon easy moss he lays,
And sings some charming shepherdess's praise.

V.

HYMN TO GOD'S POWER.

HAIL! Power Divine, who by Thy sole command,
From the dark empty space,
Made the broad sea and solid land
Smile with a heavenly grace.

Made the high mountain and firm rock,
Where bleating cattle stray;
And the strong, stately, spreading oak,
That intercepts the day.

The rolling planets Thou madest move,
By Thy effective will;
And the revolving globes above
Their destined course fulfil.

His mighty power, ye thunders, praise,
As through the heavens you roll;
And His great name, ye lightnings, blaze,
Unto the distant pole.

Ye seas, in your eternal roar,
His sacred praise proclaim;
While the inactive sluggish shore
Reechoes to the same.

Ye howling winds, howl out His praise,
And make the forests bow;
While through the air, the earth, and seas,
His solemn praise ye blow.

O yon high harmonious spheres,
Your powerful Mover sing;
To Him your circling course that steers,
Your tuneful praises bring.

Ungrateful mortals, catch the sound,
And in your numerous lays,
To all the listening world around,
The God of nature praise.

VI.

PSALM CIV. PARAPHRASED.

O praise thy Author, Soul, do not forget;
Canst thou, in gratitude, deny the debt?
Lord, Thou art great, how great we cannot know;
Honour and majesty do round Thee flow.
The purest rays of primogenial light
Compose Thy robes, and make them dazzling bright;
The heavens and all the wide spread orbs on high
Thou like a curtain stretched of curious dye;
On the devouring flood Thy chambers are
Established; a lofty cloud's Thy car;
Which quick through the ethereal road doth fly,
On swift winged winds, that shake the troubled sky.
Of spiritual substance angels Thou didst frame,
Active and bright, piercing and quick as flame.
Thou'st firmly founded this unwieldy earth;
Stand fast for aye, Thou saidst, at nature's birth.
The swelling flood Thou o'er the earth madest creep,
And coveredst it with the vast hoary deep:
Then hills and vales did no distinction know,
But levelled nature lay oppressed below.
With speed they, at Thy awful thunder's roar,
Shrinkèd within the limits of their shore.
Through secret tracts they up the mountains creep,
And rocky caverns fruitful moisture weep,
Which sweetly through the verdant vales doth glide,
Till 'tis devoured by the greedy tide.

The feeble sands Thou'st made the ocean's mounds,
Its foaming waves shall ne'er repass these bounds,
Again to triumph over the dry grounds.
Between the hills, grazed by the bleating kind,
Soft warbling rills their mazy way do find;
By Him appointed fully to supply,
When the hot dogstar fires the realms on high,
The raging thirst of every sickening beast,
Of the wild ass that roams the dreary waste:
The feathered nation, by their smiling sides,
In lowly brambles, or in trees abides;
By nature taught, on them they rear their nests,
That with inimitable art are dressed.
They for the shade and safety of the wood
With natural music cheer the neighbourhood.
He doth the clouds with genial moisture fill,
Which on the [shr]ivelled ground they bounteously distil,
And nature's lap with various blessings crowd:
The giver, God! all creatures cry aloud.
With freshest green He clothes the fragrant mead,
Whereon the grazing herds wanton and feed.
With vital juice He makes the plants abound,
And herbs securely spring above the ground,
That man may be sustained beneath the toil
Of manuring the ill producing soil;
Which with a plenteous harvest does at last
Cancel the memory of labours past;
Yields him the product of the generous vine,
And balmy oil that makes his face to shine:
Fills all his granaries with a loaden crop,
Against the bare barren winter his great prop.
The trees of God with kindly sap do swell,

Even cedars tall in Lebanon that dwell,
Upon whose lofty tops the birds erect
Their nests, as careful nature does direct.
The long necked storks unto the fir trees fly,
And with their crackling cries disturb the sky.
To unfrequented hills wild goats resort,
And on bleak rocks the nimble conies sport.
The changing moon He clad with silver light,
To check the black dominion of the night:
High through the skies in silent state she rides,
And by her rounds the fleeting time divides.
The circling sun doth in due time decline,
And unto shades the murmuring world resign.
Dark night Thou makest succeed the cheerful day,
Which forest beasts from their lone caves survey:
They rouse themselves, creep out, and search their prey.
Young hungry lions from their dens come out,
And, mad on blood, stalk fearfully about:
They break night's silence with their hideous roar,
And from kind heaven their nightly prey implore.
Just as the lark begins to stretch her wing,
And, flickering on her nest, makes short essays to sing,
And the sweet dawn, with a faint glimmering light,
Unveils the face of nature to the sight,
To their dark dens they take their hasty flight.
Not so the husbandman,—for with the sun
He does his pleasant course of labours run:
Home with content in the cool e'en returns,
And his sweet toils until the morn adjourns.
How many are Thy wondrous works, O Lord!
They of Thy wisdom solid proofs afford:

Out of Thy boundless goodness Thou didst fill,
With riches and delights, both vale and hill:
Even the broad ocean, wherein do abide
Monsters that flounce upon the boiling tide,
And swarms of lesser beasts and fish beside:
'Tis there that daring ships before the wind
Do send amain, and make the port assigned:
'Tis there that Leviathan sports and plays,
And spouts his water in the face of day;
For food with gaping mouth they wait on Thee,
If Thou withhold'st, they pine, they faint, they die.
Thou bountifully opest Thy liberal hand,
And scatter'st plenty both on sea and land.
Thy vital Spirit makes all things live below,
The face of nature with new beauties glow.
God's awful glory ne'er will have an end,
To vast eternity it will extend.
When He surveys His works, at the wide sight
He doth rejoice, and take divine delight.
His looks the earth into its centre shakes;
A touch of His to smoke the mountains makes.
I'll to God's honour consecrate my lays,
And when I cease to be I'll cease to praise.
Upon the Lord, a sublime lofty theme,
My meditations sweet, my joys supreme.
Let daring sinners feel Thy vengeful rod,
May they no more be known by their abode.
My soul and all my powers, O bless the Lord,
And the whole race of men with one accord.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY

VII.

A COMPLAINT ON THE MISERIES OF LIFE.

LOATHE, O Lord, this life below,
And all its fading fleeting joys;
'Tis a short space that's filled with woe,
Which all our bliss by far outweighs.
When will the everlasting morn
With dawning light the skies adorn?

Fitly this life's compared to night,
When gloomy darkness shades the sky;
Just like the morn's our glimmering light
Reflected from the Deity.
When will celestial morn dispel
These dark surrounding shades of hell?

I'm sick of this vexatious state,
Where cares invade my peaceful hours;
Strike the last blow, O courteous fate,
I'll smiling fall like mowed flowers;
I'll gladly spurn this clogging clay,
And, sweetly singing, soar away.

What's money but refined dust?
What's honour but an empty name?
And what is soft enticing lust,
But a consuming idle flame?
Yea, what is all beneath the sky
But emptiness and vanity?

With thousand ills our life's oppressed,
  There's nothing here worth living for,
In the lone grave I long to rest,
  And be harassed here no more:
Where joy's fantastic, grief's sincere,
And where there's nought for which I care.

Thy word, O Lord, shall be my guide,
  Heaven, where Thou dwellest is my goal;
Through corrupt life grant I may glide
  With an untainted upward soul.
Then may this life, this dreary night,
Dispelled be by morning light.

VIII.

A PASTORAL BETWIXT DAVID, THIRSIS, AND THE ANGEL GABRIEL, UPON THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOUR.

DAVID.

WHAT means yon apparition in the sky,
  Thirsis, that dazzles every shepherd's eye?
I slumbering was when from yon glorious cloud
Came gliding music heavenly, sweet, and loud,
With sacred raptures which my bosom fires,
And with celestial joy my soul inspires;
It soothes the native horrors of the night,
And gladdens nature more than dawning light.

THIRSIS.

But hold, see hither through the yielding air
An angel comes: for mighty news prepare.

ANGEL GABRIEL.

Rejoice, ye swains, anticipate the morn
With songs of praise; for lo! a Saviour's born.
With joyful haste to Bethlehem repair,
And you will find the almighty Infant there;
Wrapped in a swaddling band you'll find your King,
And in a manger laid, to Him your praises bring.

CHORUS OF ANGELS.

To God who in the highest dwells,
Immortal glory be;
Let peace be in the humble cells
Of Adam's progeny.

DAVID.

No more the year shall wintry horrors bring;
Fixed in the indulgence of eternal spring,
Immortal green shall clothe the hills and vales,
And odorous sweets shall load the balmy gales;
The silver brooks shall in soft murmurs tell
The joy that shall their oozy channels swell.
Feed on, my flocks, and crop the tender grass,
Let blooming joy appear on every face;
For lo! this blessed, this propitious morn,
The Saviour of lost mankind is born.

THIRSIS.

Thou fairest morn that ever sprang from night,
Or decked the opening skies with rosy light,
Well mayst thou shine with a distinguished ray,
Since here Emmanuel condescends to stay.
Our fears, our guilt, our darkness to dispel,
And save us from the horrid jaws of hell.
Who from His throne descended, matchless love!
To guide poor mortals to blest seats above:
But come without delay, let us be gone,
Shepherd, let's go, and humbly kiss the Son.

IX.

A PASTORAL BETWEEN THIRSIS AND CORYDON, UPON THE DEATH OF DAMON,

BY WHOM IS MEANT MR. W. RIDDELL.

THIRSIS.

SAY, tell me true, what is the doleful cause
That Corydon is not the man he was?
Your cheerful presence used to lighten cares,
And from the plains to banish gloomy fears.
Whene'er unto the circling swains you sung,
Our ravished souls upon the music hung;

The gazing, listening flocks forgot their meat,
While vocal grottoes did your lays repeat:
But now your gravity our mirth rebukes,
And in your downcast and desponding looks
Appears some fatal and impending woe;
I fear to ask, and yet desire to know.

COR. The doleful news, how shall I, Thirsis, tell!
In blooming youth the hapless Damon fell:
He's dead, he's dead, and with him all my joy;
The mournful thought does all gay forms destroy:
This is the cause of my unusual grief,
Which sullenly admits of no relief.

THIR. Begone all mirth! begone all sports and play,
To a deluge of grief and tears give way.
Damon the just, the generous, and the young,
Must Damon's worth and merit be unsung?
No, Corydon, the wondrous youth you knew
How as in years so he in virtue grew;
Embalm his fame in never dying verse,
As a just tribute to his doleful hearse.

COR. Assist me, mighty grief, my breast inspire
With generous heats and with thy wildest fire,
While in a solemn and a mournful strain
Of Damon gone for ever I complain.
Ye muses, weep; your mirth and songs forbear,
And for him sigh and shed a friendly tear;
He was your favourite, and by your aid
In charming verse his witty thoughts arrayed;
He had of knowledge, learning, wit, a store,
To it denied he still pressed after more.
He was a pious and a virtuous soul,
And still pressed forward to the heavenly goal;

He was a faithful, true, and constant friend,
Faithful, and true, and constant to the end.
Ye flowers, hang down and droop your heads,
No more around your grateful odour spreads;
Ye leafy trees, your blooming honours shed,
Damon for ever from your shade is fled;
Fled to the mansions of eternal light,
Where endless wonders strike his happy sight.
Ye birds, be mute, as through the trees you fly,
Mute as the grave wherein my friend does lie.
Ye winds, breathe sighs as through the air you rove,
And in sad pomp the trembling branches move.
Ye gliding brooks, O weep your channels dry,
My flowing tears them fully shall supply;
You in soft murmurs may your grief express,
And yours, you swains, in mournful songs confess.
I to some dark and gloomy shade will fly,
Dark as the grave wherein my friend does lie;
And for his death to lonely rocks complain
In mournful accents and a dying strain,
While pining echo answers me again.

X.

A PASTORAL ENTERTAINMENT.

HILE in heroic numbers some relate
The amazing turns of wise eternal fate;
Exploits of heroes in the dusty field,
That to their name immortal honour yield;
Grant me, ye powers, fast by the limpid spring

The harmless revels of the plain to sing.
At a rich feast, kept each revolving year,
Their fleecy care when joyful shepherds shear,
A wreath of flowers culled from the neighbouring lands
Is all the prize my humble muse demands.
Now blithsome shepherds, by the early dawn,
Their new shorn flocks drive to the dewy lawn;
While, in a bleating language, each salutes
The welcome morning and their fellow brutes:
Then all prepared for the rural feast,
And in their finest Sunday habits drest;
The crystal brook supplied the mirror's place,
. . . they bathed and viewed their cleanly face,
. . . . . and nymphs resorted to the fields
. . . . . pomp the country yields.
The place appointed was a spacious vale,
Fanned always by a cooling western gale,
Which in soft breezes through the meadows stray,
And steals the ripened fragrancies away;
With native incense all the air perfumes,
Renewing with its genial breath the blooms,
Here every shepherd might his flocks survey,
Securely roam and take his harmless play;
And here were flowers each shepherdess to grace,
On her fair bosom courting but a place.
How in this vale, beneath a grateful shade,
By twining boughs of spreading beeches made,
On seats of homely turf themselves they place,
And cheerfully enjoyed their rural feast,
Consisting of the product of the fields,
And all the luxury the country yields.
No maddening liquors spoiled their harmless mirth,

But an untainted spring their thirst allayed,
Which in meanders through the valley strayed.
Thrice happy swains who spend your golden days
In country pastime; and when night displays
Her sable shade, to peaceful huts retire;
Can any man a sweeter bliss desire?
In ancient times so passed the smiling hour,
When our first parents lived in Eden's bower,
Ere care and trouble were pronounced on . . .
Or sin had blasted the creation's blo . . . .

XI.

LINES ON MARLEFIELD.*

WHAT is the task that to the muse belongs?
What but to deck in her harmonious songs
The beauteous works of nature and of art,
Rural retreats that cheer the heavy heart?
Then Marlefield begin, my muse, and sing;
With Marlefield the hills and vales shall ring.
O! what delight and pleasure 'tis to rove
Through all the walks and alleys of this grove,
Where spreading trees a checkered scene display,
Partly admitting and excluding day;
Where cheerful green and odorous sweets conspire
The drooping soul with pleasure to inspire;

* The seat of Sir William Bennet, of Grubbat, Bart.

Where little birds employ their narrow throats
To sing its praises in unlaboured notes.
To it adjoined a rising fabric stands,
Which with its state our silent awe commands.
Its endless beauties mock the poet's pen;
So to the garden I'll return again.
Pomona makes the trees with fruit abound,
And blushing Flora paints the enamelled ground.
Here lavish nature does her stores disclose,
Flowers of all hue, their queen the bashful rose,
With their sweet breath the ambient air's perfumed,
Nor is thereby their fragrant stores consumed.
O'er the fair landscape sportive zephyrs scud,
And by kind force display the infant bud.
The vegetable kind here rear their head,
By kindly showers and heaven's indulgence fed:
Of fabled nymphs such were the sacred haunts,
But real nymphs this charming dwelling vaunts.
Now to the greenhouse let's awhile retire,
To shun the heat of Sol's infectious fire:
Immortal authors grace this cool retreat,
Of ancient times, and of a modern date.
Here would my praises and my fancy dwell;
But it, alas, description does excel.
O may this sweet, this beautiful abode
Remain the charge of the eternal God.

XII.

ON BEAUTY.

BEAUTY deserves the homage of the muse:
Shall mine, rebellious, the dear theme refuse?
No; while my breast respires the vital air,
Wholly I am devoted to the fair.
Beauty I'll sing in my sublimest lays,
I burn to give her just immortal praise.
The heavenly maid with transport I'll pursue
To her abode, and all her graces view.
This happy place with all delights abounds,
And plenty broods upon the fertile grounds.
Here verdant grass their waving . . . . . .
And hills and vales in sweet confusion lie:
The nibbling flock stray o'er the rising hills,
And all around with bleating music fills:
High on their fronts tall blooming forests nod,
Of sylvan deities the blest abode:
The feathered minstrels hop from spray to spray,
And chant their gladsome carols all the day;
Till dusky night, advancing in her car,
Makes with declining light successful war.
Then Philomel her mournful lay repeats,
And through her throat breathes melancholy sweets.
Still higher yet wild rugged rocks arise,
That all ascent to human foot denies,
And strike beholders with a dread surprise.

This paradise these towering hills surround,
That thither is one only passage found.
Increasing brooks roll down the mountain's side,
And as they pass the opposing pebbles chide.

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. . . . . .

But vernal showers refresh the blooming year.
Their only season is eternal spring,
Which hovers o'er them with a downy wing:
Blossoms and fruits at once the trees adorn
With glowing blushes, like the rosy morn.
The way that to this stately palace goes
Of myrtle trees, lies 'twixt two even rows,
Which, towering high, with outstretched arms displayed,
Over our heads a living arch have made.
To sing, my muse, the bold attempt begin,
Of awful beauties you behold within:
The Goddess sat upon a throne of gold,
Embossed with figures charming to behold;
Here new made Eve stood in her early bloom,
Not yet obscured with sin's sullen gloom;
Her naked beauties do the soul confound,
From every part is given a fatal wound;
There other beauties of a meaner fame
Oblige the sight, whom here I shall not name.
In her right hand she did a sceptre sway,
O'er all mankind ambitious to obey:
Her lovely forehead and her killing eye,
Her blushing cheeks of a vermilion dye,
Her lip's soft pulp, her heaving snowy breast,
Her well turned arm, her handsome slender waist,
And all below veiled from the curious eye;

Oh! heavenly maid! makes all beholders cry.
Her dress was plain, not pompous as a bride,
Which would her sweeter native beauties hide.
One thing I mind, a spreading hoop she wore,
Than which no thing adorns a lady more.
With equal rage, could I its beauties sing,
I'd with the hoop make all Parnassus ring.
Around her shoulders, dangling on her throne,
A bright Tartana carelessly was thrown,
Which has already won immortal praise,
Most sweetly sung in Allan Ramsay's lays;
The wanton Cupids did around her play,
And smiling loves upon her bosom stray;
With purple wings they round about her flew,
And her sweet lips tinged with ambrosial dew:
Her air was easy, graceful was her mien,
Her presence banished the ungrateful spleen;
In short, her divine influence refined
Our corrupt hearts, and polished mankind.
Of lovely nymphs she had a smiling train,
Fairer than those e'er graced Arcadia's plain.
The British ladies next to her took place,
Who chiefly did the fair assembly grace.
What blooming virgins can Britannia boast,
Their praises would all eloquence exhaust.
With ladies there my ravished eyes did meet,
That oft I've seen grace fair Edina's street,
With their broad hoops cut through the willing air,
Pleased to give place unto the lovely fair:
Sure this is like those blissful seats above,
Here is peace, transporting joy, and love.
Should I be doomed by cruel angry fate
In some lone isle my lingering end to wait,

Yet happy I! still happy should I be!
While blest with virtue and a charming she;
With full content I'd fortune's pride despise,
And die still gazing on her lovely eyes.
May all the blessings mortals need below,
May all the blessings heaven can bestow,
May every thing that's pleasant, good, or rare,
Be the eternal portion of the Fair.

XIII.

ON THE HOOP.

THE hoop, the darling justly of the fair,
Of every generous swain deserves the care.
It is unmanly to desert the weak,
'Twould urge a stone, if possible to speak;
To hear stanch hypocrites bawl out, and cry,
"This hoop's a whorish garb, fie! ladies, fie!"
O cruel and audacious men, to blast
The fame of ladies more than vestals chaste,
Should you go search the globe throughout,
You'll find none so pious and devout;
So modest, chaste, so handsome, and so fair,
As our dear Caledonian ladies are.
When awful beauty puts on all her charms,
Nought gives our sex such terrible alarms,
As when the hoop and tartan both combine
To make a virgin like a goddess shine.
Let quakers cut their clothes unto the quick,

And with severities themselves afflict;
But may the hoop adorn Edina's street,
Till the south pole shall with the northern meet.

XIV.

AN ELEGY ON PARTING.

T was a sad, ay 'twas a sad farewell,
I still afresh the pangs of parting feel;
Against my breast my heart impatient beat,
And in deep sighs bemoaned its cruel fate;
Thus with the object of my love to part,
My life! my joy! 'twould rend a rocky heart.
Where'er I turn myself, where'er I go,
I meet the image of my lovely foe;
With witching charms the phantom still appears,
And with her wanton smiles insults my tears;
Still haunts the places where we used to walk,
And where with raptures oft I heard her talk:
Those scenes I now with deepest sorrow view,
And sighing bid to all delight adieu.
While I my head upon this turf recline,
Officious sun, in vain on me you shine;
In vain unto the smiling fields I hie;
In vain the flowery meads salute my eye;
In vain the cheerful birds and shepherds sing,
And with their carols make the valleys ring;
Yea, all the pleasure that the country yield
Can't me from sorrow for her absence shield:

With divine pleasure books which one inspire,
Yea, books themselves I do not now admire.
But hark! methinks some pitying power I hear,
This welcome message whisper in my ear:
"Forget thy groundless griefs, dejected swain,
You and the nymph you love shall meet again;
No more your muse shall sing such mournful lays,
But bounteous heaven and your kind mistress
praise."

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

FRAGMENT OF A POEM ON THE WORKS AND WONDERS OF ALMIGHTY POWER.

SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN ON A SUMMER NIGHT IN A GARDEN.*

NOW I surveyed my native faculties,
And traced my actions to their teeming source.
Now I explored the universal frame;
Gazed nature through, and with interior light
Conversed with angels and unbodied saints,
That tread the courts of the Eternal King!
Gladly would I declare, in lofty strains,
The power of Godhead to the sons of men.
But thought is lost in its immensity;
Imagination wastes its strength in vain;

* This poem, which was written at an early age, was given by Thomson to Aaron Hill, who inserted it in the 46th number of "The Plain Dealer;" it was reprinted by Allan Cunningham in his life of the poet, and is now for the first time inserted in the Aldine Edition.

And fancy tires, and turns within itself,
Struck with the amazing depths of Deity!
Ah! my loved God! in vain a tender youth
Unskilled in arts of deep philosophy,
Attempts to search the bulky mass of matter;
To trace the rules of motion; and pursue
The phantom Time, too subtile for his grasp!
Yet may I, from Thy most apparent works,
Form some idea of their wondrous Author,
And celebrate Thy praise with rapturous mind!
How can I gaze upon yon sparkling vault,
And view the planets rolling in their spheres,
Yet be an atheist? Can I see those stars,
And think of others far beyond my ken,
Yet want conviction of Creating Power?
What but a Being of immense perfection
Could, through unbounded spaces, thus dispose
Such numerous bodies, all presumptive worlds?
The undesigning hand of giddy Chance
Could never fill, with globes so vast, so bright,
That lofty concave!
Where shall I trace the sources of the light?
What seats assign the element of fire,
That, unconfined, through all the systems breaks?
Here could I lie in holy contemplation rapt,
And pass with pleasure an eternal age!
But 'tis too much for my weak mind to know:
Teach me, with humble reverence, to adore
The mysteries I must not comprehend!

OF A COUNTRY LIFE.*

HATE the clamours of the smoky towns,
But much admire the bliss of rural clowns;
Where some remains of innocence appear,
Where no rude noise insults the listening ear;
Nought but soft zephyrs whispering through the trees,
Or the still humming of the painful bees;
The gentle murmurs of a purling rill,
Or the unwearied chirping of the drill;
The charming harmony of warbling birds,
Or hollow lowings of the grazing herds;
The murmuring stockdoves' melancholy coo,
When they their lovèd mates lament or woo;
The pleasing bleatings of the tender lambs,
Or the indistinct mumbling of their dams;
The musical discord of chiding hounds,
Whereto the echoing hill or rock resounds;
The rural mournful songs of love sick swains,
Whereby they soothe their raging amorous pains;
The whistling music of the lagging plough,
Which does the strength of drooping beasts renew.
And as the country rings with pleasant sounds,
So with delightful prospects it abounds:
Through every season of the sliding year,
Unto the ravished sight new scenes appear.

* First printed in 1720, in the Edinburgh Miscellany, vol. i. p. 193, where it is stated to be by "A student in the University," and signed T.

In the sweet Spring the sun's prolific ray
Does painted flowers to the mild air display;
Then opening buds, then tender herbs are seen,
And the bare fields are all arrayed in green.
In ripening Summer, the full laden vales
Gives prospect of employment for the flails;
Each breath of wind the bearded groves makes bend,
Which seems the fatal sickle to portend.
In Autumn, that repays the labourer's pains,
Reapers sweep down the honours of the plains.
Anon black Winter, from the frozen north,
Its treasuries of snow and hail pours forth;
Then stormy winds blow through the hazy sky,
In desolation nature seems to lie;
The unstained snow from the full clouds descends,
Whose sparkling lustre open eyes offends.
In maiden white the glittering fields do shine;
Then bleating flocks for want of food repine,
With withered eyes they see all snow around,
And with their fore feet paw and scrape the ground:
They cheerfully do crop the insipid grass,
The shepherds sighing, cry, Alas! alas!
Then pinching want the wildest beast does tame;
Then huntsmen on the snow do trace their game;
Keen frost then turns the liquid lakes to glass,
Arrests the dancing rivulets as they pass.
How sweet and innocent are country sports,
And, as men's tempers, various are their sorts.
You, on the banks of soft meandering Tweed,
May in your toils ensnare the watery breed,
And nicely lead the artificial flee,*

* Fly.

Which, when the nimble, watchful trout does see,
He at the bearded hook will briskly spring;
Then in that instant twitch your hairy string,
And, when he's hooked, you, with a constant hand,
May draw him struggling to the fatal land.

Then at fit seasons you may clothe your hook,
With a sweet bait, dressed by a faithless cook;
The greedy pike darts to't with eager haste,
And being struck, in vain he flies at last;
He rages, storms, and flounces through the stream,
But all, alas! his life cannot redeem.

At other times you may pursue the chase,
And hunt the nimble hare from place to place.
See, when the dog is just upon the grip,
Out at a side she'll make a handsome skip,
And ere he can divert his furious course,
She, far before him, scours with all her force:
She'll shift, and many times run the same ground;
At last, outwearied by the stronger hound,
She falls a sacrifice unto his hate,
And with sad piteous screams laments her fate.

See how the hawk doth take his towering flight,
And in his course outflies our very sight,
Beats down the fluttering fowl with all his might.

See how the wary gunner casts about,
Watching the fittest posture when to shoot:
Quick as the fatal lightning blasts the oak,
He gives the springing fowl a sudden stroke;
He pours upon't a shower of mortal lead,
And ere the noise is heard the fowl is dead.

Sometimes he spreads his hidden subtile snare,
Of which the entangled fowl was not aware;
Through pathless wastes he doth pursue his sport,

Where nought but moor-fowl and wild beasts resort.
When the noon sun directly darts his beams
Upon your giddy heads, with fiery gleams,
Then you may bathe yourself in cooling streams;
Or to the sweet adjoining grove retire,
Where trees with interwoven boughs conspire
To form a grateful shade;—there rural swains
Do tune their oaten reeds to rural strains;
The silent birds sit listening on the sprays,
And in soft charming notes do imitate their lays.
There you may stretch yourself upon the grass,
And, lulled with music, to kind slumbers pass:
No meagre cares your fancy will distract,
And on that scene no tragic fears will act;
Save the dear image of a charming she,
Nought will the object of your vision be.
Away the vicious pleasures of the town;
Let empty partial fortune on me frown;
But grant, ye powers, that it may be my lot
To live in peace from noisy towns remote.

UPON HAPPINESS.*

ARNED by the summer sun's meridian ray,
As underneath a spreading oak I lay
Contemplating the mighty load of woe,

* First printed in 1720 in the Edinburgh Miscellany, where it follows "Of a Country Life," is stated to be "by the same hand," and signed T.

In search of bliss that mortals undergo,
Who, while they think they happiness enjoy,
Embrace a curse wrapt in delusive joy,
I reasoned thus: since the Creator, God,
Who in eternal love has His abode,
Hath blended with the essence of the soul
An appetite as fixèd as the pole,
That's always eager in pursuit of bliss,
And always veering till it point to this,
There is some object adequate to fill
This boundless wish of our extended will.
Now, while my thought round nature's circle runs
(A bolder journey than the furious sun's)
This chief and satiating good to find
The attracting centre of the human mind,
My ears they deafened, to my swimming eyes
His magic wand the drowsy god applies,
Bound all my senses in a silken sleep,
While mimic fancy did her vigils keep;
Yet still methinks some condescending power
Ranged the ideas in my mind that hour.
  Methought I wandering was, with thousands more,
Beneath a high prodigious hill, before,
Above the clouds whose towering summit rose,
With utmost labour only gained by those
Who grovelling prejudices threw away,
And with incessant straining climbed their way;
Where all who stood their failing breath to gain,
With headlong ruin tumbled down amain.
This mountain is through every nation famed,
And, as I learnèd, Contemplation named.
O happy me! when I had reached its top

Unto my sight a boundless scene did ope.
First, sadly I surveyed with downward eye,
Of restless men below the busy fry,
Who hunted trifles in an endless maze,
Like foolish boys, on sunny summer days,
Pursuing butterflies with all their might,
Who can't their troubles, in the chase requite.
The painted insect, he who most admires,
Grieves most when it in his rude hand expires;
Or should it live, with endless fears is tossed,
Lest it take wing and be for ever lost.
Some men I saw their utmost art employ
How to attain a false deceitful joy,
Which from afar conspicuously did blaze,
And at a distance fixed their ravished gaze,
But nigh at hand it mocked their fond embrace.
When lo! again it flashèd in their eyes,
But still, as they drew near, the fond illusion dies.
Just so I've seen a water-dog pursue
An unflown duck within his greedy view,
When he has, panting, at his prey arrived,
The coxcomb fooling—suddenly it dived;
He, gripping, is almost with water choked,
And grief, that all his towering hopes are mocked.
Then it emerges, he renews his toil,
And o'er and o'er again he gets the foil.
Yea, all the joys beneath the conscious sun,
And softer ones that his inspection shun,
Much of their pleasures in fruition fade.
Enjoyment o'er them throws a sullen shade.
The reason is, we promise vaster things
And sweeter joys than from their nature springs:
When they are lost, weep the apparent bliss,

And not what really in fruition is;
So that our griefs are greater than our joys,
And real pain springs from fantastic toys.
Though all terrene delights of men below
Are almost nothing but a glaring show;
Yet if there always were a virgin joy,
When t'other fades, to soothe the wanton boy,
He somewhat might excuse his heedless course,
Some show of reason for the same enforce:
But frugal nature wisely does deny
To mankind such profuse variety;
Has only what is needful to us given,
To feed and cheer us in the way to Heaven;
And more would but the traveller delay,
Impede and clog him in his upward way.
I from the mount all mortal pleasures saw
Themselves within a narrow compass draw:
The libertine a nauseous circle run,
And dully acted what he'd often done.
Just so when Luna darts her silver ray,
And pours on silent earth a paler day:
From Stygian caves the flitting fairies scud,
And on the margent of some limpid flood,
Which by reflected moonlight darts a glance,
In midnight circles range themselves and dance.
To-morrow, cries he, will us entertain:
Pray what's to-morrow but to-day again?
Deluded youth, no more the chase pursue,
So oft deceived, no more the toil renew.
But in a constant and a fixed design
Of acting well there is a lasting mine
Of solid satisfaction, purest joy,
For virtue's pleasures never, never cloy:

Then hither come, climb up the steep ascent,
Your painful labour you will ne'er repent,
From Heaven itself here you're but one remove,
Here's the præludium of the joys above,
Here you'll behold the awful Godhead shine,
And all perfections in the same combine;
You'll see that God, who, by His powerful call,
From empty nothing drew this spacious all,
Made beauteous order the rude mass control,
And every part subservient to the whole;
Here you'll behold upon the fatal tree
The God of nature bleed, expire, and die,
For such as 'gainst His holy laws rebel,
And such as bid defiance to His hell.
Through the dark gulf, here you may clearly pry
'Twixt narrow Time and vast Eternity.
Behold the Godhead just, as well as good,
And vengeance poured on tramplers on His blood:
But all the tears wiped from His people's eyes,
And, for their entrance, cleave the parting skies.
Then sure you will with holy ardours burn,
And to seraphic heats your passion turn;
Then in your eyes all mortal fair will fade,
And leave of mortal beauties but the shade;
Yourself to Him you'll solemnly devote,
To Him, without Whose providence you're not;
You'll of His service relish the delight,
And to His praises all your powers excite;
You'll celebrate His name in heavenly sound,
Which well pleased skies in echoes will rebound;
This is the greatest happiness that can
Possessèd be in this short life by man.
But darkly here the Godhead we survey,

Confined and crampèd in this cage of clay.
What cruel band is this to earth that ties
Our souls from soaring to their native skies?
Upon the bright Eternal Face to gaze,
And there drink in the beatific rays:
There to behold the Good One and the Fair,
A ray from Whom all mortal beauties are?
In beauteous nature all the harmony
Is but the echo of the Deity,
Of all perfection Who the Centre is,
And boundless ocean of untainted bliss;
For ever open to the ravished view,
And full enjoyment of the radiant crew
Who live in raptures of eternal joy,
Whose flaming love their tuneful harps employ
In solemn hymns Jehovah's praise to sing,
And make all heaven with hallelujahs ring.
These realms of light no further I'll explore,
And in these heights I will no longer soar:
Not like our grosser atmosphere beneath,
The ether here's too thin for me to breathe.
The region is unsufferable bright,
And flashes on me with too strong a light.
Then from the mountain, lo! I now descend,
And to my vision put a hasty end.

VERSES ON RECEIVING A FLOWER FROM HIS MISTRESS.*

MADAM, the flower that I received from you,
Ere I came home, had lost its lovely hue:
As flowers deprived of the genial day,
Its sprightly bloom did wither and decay:
Dear, fading flower, I know full well, said I,
The reason that you shed your sweets and die;
You want the influence of her enlivening eye.
Your case is mine—Absence, that plague of love!
With heavy pace makes every minute move:
It of my being is an empty blank,
And hinders me myself with men to rank;
Your cheering presence quickens me again,
And new-sprung life exults in every vein.

ON THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER.†

YE fabled muses, I your aid disclaim,
Your airy raptures, and your fancied flame:
True genuine woe my throbbing breast inspires,

* First printed in the Edinburgh Miscellany, vol. 1, 1720; "By the same hand" as the two preceding poems.

† First published in 1792, in the Earl of Buchan's Essay on the Life of Thomson, from the original manuscript in his

Love prompts my lays, and filial duty fires;
The soul springs instant at the warm design,
And the heart dictates every flowing line.
See! where the kindest, best of mothers lies,
And death has shut her ever weeping eyes;
Has lodged at last in peace her weary breast,
And lulled her many piercing cares to rest.
No more the orphan train around her stands,
While her full heart upbraids her needy hands!
No more the widow's lonely fate she feels,
The shock severe that modest want conceals,
The oppressor's scourge, the scorn of wealthy pride,
And poverty's unnumbered ills beside.
For see! attended by the angelic throng,
Through yonder worlds of light she glides along,
And claims the well earned raptures of the sky:
Yet fond concern recalls the mother's eye;
She seeks the helpless orphans left behind:
So hardly left! so bitterly resigned!
Still, still! is she my soul's divinest theme,
The waking vision, and the wailing dream:
Amid the ruddy sun's enlivening blaze
O'er my dark eyes her dewy image plays,
And in the dread dominion of the night
Shines out again the sadly pleasing sight.
Triumphant virtue all around her darts,
And more than volumes every look imparts—
Looks, soft, yet awful; melting, yet serene;
Where both the mother and the saint are seen.
But ah! that night—that torturing night remains;

lordship's possession; it was probably written shortly after Mrs. Thomson's death, which occurred on May 10, 1725. See Memoir, p. xxii.

May darkness dye it with its deepest stains,
May joy on it forsake her rosy bowers,
And screaming sorrow blast its baleful hours,
When on the margin of the briny flood,*
Chilled with a sad presaging damp I stood,
Took the last look, ne'er to behold her more,
And mixed our murmurs with the wavy roar;
Heard the last words fall from her pious tongue,
Then, wild into the bulging vessel flung,
Which soon, too soon, conveyed me from her sight,
Dearer than life, and liberty, and light!
Why was I then, ye powers, reserved for this?
Nor sunk that moment in the vast abyss?
Devoured at once by the relentless wave,
And whelmed for ever in a watery grave?—
Down, ye wild wishes of unruly woe!—
I see her with immortal beauty glow;
The early wrinkle, care-contracted, gone,
Her tears all wiped, and all her sorrows flown;
The exalting voice of Heaven I hear her breathe,
To soothe her soul in agonies of death.
I see her through the mansions blest above,
And now she meets her dear expecting love.
Heart-cheering sight! but yet, alas! o'erspread
By the damp gloom of grief's uncheerful shade,
Come then, of reason the reflecting hour,
And let me trust the kind o'erruling Power,
Who from the night commands the shining day,
The poor man's portion, and the orphan's stay.

* On the shore of Leith when he embarked for London.

TO THE

MEMORY OF SIR ISAAC NEWTON.*

SHALL the great soul of Newton quit this earth,
To mingle with his stars; and every Muse,
Astonished into silence, shun the weight
Of honours due to his illustrious name?
But what can man?—Even now the sons of light,
In strains high warbled to seraphic lyre,
Hail his arrival on the coast of bliss.
Yet am not I deterred, though high the theme,
And sung to harps of angels, for with you,
Ethereal flames! ambitious, I aspire
In Nature's general symphony to join.
And what new wonders can ye show your guest!
Who, while on this dim spot, where mortals toil

* Sir Isaac Newton died March 20th, 1727, and this poem appeared in the following June in folio; it was dedicated in very flattering terms to Sir Robert Walpole, but the dedication was omitted in the subsequent editions; it will be found in page xlviii. of the Memoir. The text here followed is that of the collected edition of Thomson's Works, 3 vols. 8vo, 1744, the last published in the author's lifetime.

Clouded in dust, from motion's simple laws,
Could trace the secret hand of Providence,
Wide-working through this universal frame.
Have ye not listened while he bound the suns
And planets, to their spheres! the unequal task
Of humankind till then. Oft had they rolled
O'er erring man the year, and oft disgraced
The pride of schools, before their course was known
Full in its causes and effects to him,
All-piercing sage! Who sat not down and dreamed
Romantic schemes, defended by the din
Of specious words, and tyranny of names;
But, bidding his amazing mind attend,
And with heroic patience years on years
Deep-searching, saw at last the system dawn,
And shine, of all his race, on him alone.
What were his raptures then! how pure! how strong!
And what the triumphs of old Greece and Rome,
By his diminished, but the pride of boys
In some small fray victorious! when instead
Of shattered parcels of this earth usurped
By violence unmanly, and sore deeds
Of cruelty and blood, Nature herself
Stood all subdued by him, and open laid
Her every latent glory to his view.
All intellectual eye, our solar round
First gazing through, he by the blended power
Of gravitation and projection, saw
The whole in silent harmony revolve.
From unassisted vision hid, the moons
To cheer remoter planets numerous formed,
By him in all their mingled tracts were seen.

He also fixed our wandering Queen of Night,
Whether she wanes into a scanty orb,
Or, waxing broad, with her pale shadowy light,
In a soft deluge overflows the sky.
Her every motion clear-discerning, he
Adjusted to the mutual main, and taught
Why now the mighty mass of waters swells
Resistless, heaving on the broken rocks,
And the full river turning: till again
The tide revertive, unattracted, leaves
A yellow waste of idle sands behind.
Then breaking hence, he took his ardent flight
Through the blue infinite; and every star,
Which the clear concave of a winter's night
Pours on the eye, or astronomic tube,
Far stretching, snatches from the dark abyss;
Or such as further in successive skies
To fancy shine alone, at his approach
Blazed into suns, the living centre each
Of an harmonious system: all combined,
And ruled unerring by that single power,
Which draws the stone projected to the ground.
O unprofuse magnificence divine!
O wisdom truly perfect! thus to call
From a few causes such a scheme of things,
Effects so various, beautiful, and great,
An universe complete! And O, beloved
Of Heaven! whose well purged penetrating eye
The mystic veil transpiercing, inly scanned
The rising, moving, wide-established frame.
He, first of men, with awful wing pursued
The comet through the long eliptic curve,
As round innumerous worlds he wound his way;

Till, to the forehead of our evening sky
Returned the blazing wonder glares anew,
And o'er the trembling nations shakes dismay.
The heavens are all his own; from the wide rule
Of whirling vortices, and circling spheres,
To their first great simplicity restored.
The schools astonished stood; but found it vain
To combat still with demonstration strong,
And, unawakened dream beneath the blaze
Of truth. At once their pleasing visions fled,
With the gay shadows of the morning mixed,
When Newton rose, our philosophic sun!
The aërial flow of sound was known to him,
From whence it first in wavy circles breaks,
Till the touched organ takes the message in.
Nor could the darting beam of speed immense
Escape his swift pursuit, and measuring eye.
Even Light itself, which every thing displays,
Shone undiscovered, till his brighter mind
Untwisted all the shining robe of day;
And, from the whitening undistinguished blaze,
Collecting every ray into his kind,
To the charmed eye educed the gorgeous train
Of parent colours. First the flaming red
Sprung vivid forth; the tawny orange next;
And next delicious yellow; by whose side
Fell the kind beams of all-refreshing green.
Then the pure blue, that swells autumnal skies,
Ethereal played: and then, of sadder hue,
Emerged the deepened indigo, as when
The heavy-skirted evening droops with frost.
While the last gleamings of refracted light
Died in the fainting violet away.

These, when the clouds distil the rosy shower,
Shine out distinct adown the watery bow;
While o'er our heads the dewy vision bends
Delightful, melting on the fields beneath.
Myriads of mingling dyes from these result,
And myriads still remain; infinite source
Of beauty, ever flushing, ever new.
Did ever poet image aught so fair,
Dreaming in whispering groves, by the hoarse brook!
Or prophet, to whose rapture heaven descends?
Even now the setting sun and shifting clouds,
Seen, Greenwich, from thy lovely heights, declare
How just, how beauteous the refractive law.
The noiseless tide of time, all bearing down
To vast eternity's unbounded sea,
Where the green islands of the happy shine,
He stemmed alone; and to the source (involved
Deep in primeval gloom) ascending, raised
His lights at equal distances, to guide
Historian, wildered on his darksome way.
But who can number up his labours? who
His high discoveries sing? when but a few
Of the deep-studying race can stretch their minds
To what he knew: in fancy's lighter thought,
How shall the muse then grasp the mighty theme?
What wonder thence that his devotion swelled
Responsive to his knowledge? For could he,
Whose piercing mental eye diffusive saw
The finished university of things,
In all its order, magnitude, and parts,
Forbear incessant to adore that Power
Who fills, sustains, and actuates the whole?

Say, ye who best can tell, ye happy few,
Who saw him in the softest lights of life,
All unwithheld, indulging to his friends
The vast unborrowed treasures of his mind,
Oh, speak the wondrous man! how mild, how calm,
How greatly humble, how divinely good;
How firmly stablished on eternal truth;
Fervent in doing well, with every nerve
Still pressing on, forgetful of the past,
And panting for perfection: far above
Those little cares, and visionary joys,
That so perplex the fond impassioned heart
Of ever cheated, ever trusting man.
This Conduit from thy rural hours we hope,
As, through the pleasing shade where nature pours
Her every sweet, in studious ease you walk;
The social passions smiling at thy heart,
That glows with all the recollected sage.*
And you, ye hopeless gloomy-minded tribe,
You who, unconscious of those nobler flights
That reach impatient at immortal life,
Against the prime endearing privilege
Of being dare contend,—say, can a soul
Of such extensive, deep, tremendous powers,
Enlarging still, be but a finer breath
Of spirits dancing through their tubes awhile,
And then for ever lost in vacant air?
But hark! methinks I hear a warning voice,

* These five lines referred to an expected Life of Newton by Mr. Conduit, who married Sir Isaac's niece; as it never appeared, the lines were omitted from the poem after Thomson's death.

Solemn as when some awful change is come,
Sound through the world—"'Tis done!—the measure's full;
And I resign my charge."—Ye mouldering stones,
That build the towering pyramid, the proud
Triumphal arch, the monument effaced
By ruthless ruin, and whate'er supports
The worshipped name of hoar antiquity,
Down to the dust! what grandeur can ye boast
While Newton lifts his column to the skies,
Beyond the waste of time. Let no weak drop
Be shed for him. The virgin in her bloom
Cut off, the joyous youth, and darling child,
These are the tombs that claim the tender tear,
And elegiac song. But Newton calls
For other notes of gratulation high,
That now he wanders through those endless worlds
He here so well descried, and wondering talks,
And hymns their Author with his glad compeers.
O Britain's boast! whether with angels thou
Sittest in dread discourse, or fellow-blessed,
Who joy to see the honour of their kind;
Or whether, mounted on cherubic wing,
Thy swift career is with the whirling orbs,
Comparing things with things, in rapture lost,
And grateful adoration, for that light
So plenteous rayed into thy mind below,
From light Himself; oh, look with pity down
On humankind, a frail erroneous race!
Exalt the spirit of a downward world!
O'er thy dejected country chief preside,
And be her Genius called! her studies raise,
Correct her manners, and inspire her youth.

For, though depraved and sunk, she brought thee
forth,
And glories in thy name: she points thee out
To all her sons, and bids them eye thy star:
While in expectance of the second life,
When time shall be no more, thy sacred dust
Sleeps with her kings, and dignifies the scene.

BRITANNIA.*

A POEM.

——Et tantas audetis tollere moles?
Quos ego—sed motos præstat componere fluctus.
Post mihi non simili pœna commissa luetis.
Maturate fugam, regique hæc dicite vestro:
Non illi imperium pelagi, sævumque tridentem,
Sed mihi sorte datum. VIRGIL, Æneid, i. 134.

AS on the sea-beat shore Britannia sat,
Of her degenerate sons the faded fame,
Deep in her anxious heart, revolving sad:
Bare was her throbbing bosom to the gale,
That, hoarse and hollow, from the bleak surge blew;
Loose flowed her tresses; rent her azure robe.
Hung o'er the deep from her majestic brow
She tore the laurel, and she tore the bay.
Nor ceased the copious grief to bathe her cheek;
Nor ceased her sobs to murmur to the main.
Peace discontented, nigh departing, stretched

* Written in 1727, but not published till January, 1729. See Memoir, p. xlviii. note.

Her dove-like wings: and War, though greatly roused,
Yet mourns his fettered hands. While thus the queen
Of nations spoke; and what she said the muse
Recorded, faithful, in unbidden verse.
"Even not yon sail, that from the sky-mixed wave
Dawns on the sight, and wafts the Royal Youth,*
A freight of future glory to my shore;
Even not the flattering view of golden days,
And rising periods yet of bright renown,
Beneath the Parents, and their endless line
Through late revolving time, can soothe my rage;
While, unchastised, the insulting Spaniard dares
Infest the trading flood, full of vain war
Despise my navies, and my merchants seize;
As, trusting to false peace, they fearless roam
The world of waters wild; made, by the toil,
And liberal blood of glorious ages, mine:
Nor bursts my sleeping thunder on their head.
Whence this unwonted patience? this weak doubt?
This tame beseeching of rejected peace?
This meek forbearance? this unnative fear,
To generous Britons never known before?
And sailed my fleets for this; on Indian tides
To float, inactive, with the veering winds?
The mockery of war! while hot disease,
And sloth distempered, swept off burning crowds,
For action ardent; and amid the deep,
Inglorious, sunk them in a watery grave.
There now they lie beneath the rolling flood,

* Frederick Prince of Wales, then lately arrived.—Murdoch.

Far from their friends, and country, unavenged;
And back the drooping war ship comes again,
Dispirited and thin; her sons ashamed
Thus idly to review their native shore;
With not one glory sparkling in their eye,
One triumph on their tongue. A passenger,
The violated merchant comes along;
That far sought wealth, for which the noxious gale
He drew, and sweat beneath equator suns,
By lawless force detained; a force that soon
Would melt away, and every spoil resign,
Were once the British lion heard to roar.
Whence is it that the proud Iberian thus,
In their own well asserted element,
Dares rouse to wrath the masters of the main?
Who told him, that the big incumbent war
Would not, ere this, have rolled his trembling ports
In smoky ruin? and his guilty stores,
Won by the ravage of a butchered world,
Yet unatoned, sunk in the swallowing deep,
Or led the glittering prize into the Thames?
"There was a time (oh let my languid sons
Resume their spirit at the rousing thought!)
When all the pride of Spain, in one dread fleet,
Swelled o'er the labouring surge; like a whole heaven
Of clouds, wide rolled before the boundless breeze.
Gaily the splendid armament along
Exultant ploughed, reflecting a red gleam,
As sunk the sun, o'er all the flaming vast;
Tall, gorgeous, and elate; drunk with the dream
Of easy conquest; while their bloated war,
Stretched out from sky to sky, the gathered force

Of ages held in its capacious womb.
But soon, regardless of the cumbrous pomp,
My dauntless Britons came, a gloomy few,
With tempests black, the goodly scene deformed,
And laid their glory waste. The bolts of fate
Resistless thundered through their yielding sides;
Fierce o'er their beauty blazed the lurid flame;
And seized in horrid grasp, or shattered wide,
Amid the mighty waters, deep they sunk.
Then too from every promontory chill,
Rank fen, and cavern where the wild wave works,
I swept confederate winds, and swelled a storm.
Round the glad isle, snatched by the vengeful blast,
The scattered remnants drove; on the blind shelve,
And pointed rock, that marks the indented shore,
Relentless dashed, where loud the northern main
Howls through the fractured Caledonian isles.
"Such were the dawnings of my watery reign;
But since how vast it grew, how absolute,
Even in those troubled times, when dreadful Blake
Awed angry nations with the British name,
Let every humbled state, let Europe say,
Sustained, and balanced, by my naval arm.
Ah, what must those immortal spirits think
Of your poor shifts? Those, for their country's good,
Who faced the blackest danger, knew no fear,
No mean submission, but commanded peace,—
Ah, how with indignation must they burn?
(If aught, but joy, can touch ethereal breasts,)
With shame? with grief? to see their feeble sons
Shrink from that empire o'er the conquered seas,

For which their wisdom planned, their councils glowed,
And their veins bled through many a toiling age.
"Oh, first of human blessings! and supreme!
Fair Peace! how lovely, how delightful thou!
By whose wide tie the kindred sons of men
Like brothers live, in amity combined
And unsuspicious faith; while honest toil
Gives every joy, and to those joys a right,
Which idle, barbarous rapine but usurps.
Pure is thy reign; when, unaccursed by blood,
Nought, save the sweetness of indulgent showers,
Trickling distils into the vernant glebe;
Instead of mangled carcasses, sad-seen,
When the blithe sheaves lie scattered o'er the field;
When only shining shares, the crooked knife,
And hooks imprint the vegetable wound;
When the land blushes with the rose alone,
The falling fruitage and the bleeding vine.
Oh, Peace! thou source and soul of social life;
Beneath whose calm inspiring influence,
Science his views enlarges, Art refines,
And swelling Commerce opens all her ports;
Blest be the man divine who gives us thee!
Who bids the trumpet hush his horrid clang,
Nor blow the giddy nations into rage;
Who sheaths the murderous blade; the deadly gun
Into the well piled armoury returns;
And every vigour, from the work of death,
To grateful industry converting, makes
The country flourish, and the city smile.
Unviolated, him the virgin sings;
And him the smiling mother to her train.

Of him the shepherd, in the peaceful dale,
Chants; and, the treasures of his labour sure,
The husbandman of him, as at the plough,
Or team, he toils. With him the sailor soothes,
Beneath the trembling moon, the midnight wave;
And the full city, warm, from street to street,
And shop to shop, responsive, rings of him.
"Nor joys one land alone: his praise extends
Far as the sun rolls the diffusive day;
Far as the breeze can bear the gifts of peace.
Till all the happy nations catch the song.
"What would not, Peace! the patriot bear for thee?
What painful patience? What incessant care?
What mixed anxiety? What sleepless toil?
Even from the rash protected what reproach?
For he thy value knows; thy friendship he
To human nature: but the better thou,
The richer of delight, sometimes the more
Inevitable war; when ruffian force
Awakes the fury of an injured state.
Then the good easy man, whom reason rules,
Who, while unhurt, knew nor offence, nor harm,
Roused by bold insult, and injurious rage,
With sharp and sudden check the astonished sons
Of violence confounds; firm as his cause,
His bolder heart; in awful justice clad;
His eyes effulging a peculiar fire:
And, as he charges through the prostrate war,
His keen arm teaches faithless men, no more
To dare the sacred vengeance of the just.
"And what, my thoughtless sons, should fire you more

Than when your well earned empire of the deep
The least beginning injury receives?
What better cause can call your lightning forth?
Your thunder wake? your dearest life demand?
What better cause, than when your country sees
The sly destruction at her vitals aimed?
For oh! it much imports you, 'tis your all,
To keep your trade entire, entire the force
And honour of your fleets; o'er that to watch,
Even with a hand severe, and jealous eye.
In intercourse be gentle, generous, just,
By wisdom polished, and of manners fair;
But on the sea be terrible, untamed,
Unconquerable still: let none escape,
Who shall but aim to touch your glory there.
Is there the man into the lion's den
Who dares intrude, to snatch his young away?
And is a Briton seized? and seized beneath
The slumbering terrors of a British fleet?
Then ardent rise! Oh, great in vengeance rise!
O'erturn the proud, teach rapine to restore:
And as you ride sublimely round the world,
Make every vessel stoop, make every state
At once their welfare and their duty know.
This is your glory: this your wisdom; this
The native power for which you were designed
By fate, when fate designed the firmest state,
That e'er was seated on the subject sea;
A state, alone, where Liberty should live,
In these late times, this evening of mankind,
When Athens, Rome, and Carthage are no more,
The world almost in slavish sloth dissolved.
For this, these rocks around your coast were thrown;

For this, your oaks, peculiar hardened, shoot
Strong into sturdy growth: for this, your hearts
Swell with a sullen courage, growing still
As danger grows; and strength, and toil for this
Are liberal poured o'er all the fervent land.
Then cherish this, this unexpensive power,
Undangerous to the public, ever prompt,
By lavish nature thrust into your hand:
And, unencumbered with the bulk immense
Of conquest, whence huge empires rose, and fell
Self-crushed, extend your reign from shore to shore,
Where'er the wind your high behests can blow;
And fix it deep on this eternal base.
For should the sliding fabric once give way,
Soon slackened quite, and past recovery broke,
It gathers ruin as it rolls along,
Steep rushing down to that devouring gulf,
Where many a mighty empire buried lies.
And should the big redundant flood of trade,
In which ten thousand thousand labours join
Their several currents, till the boundless tide
Rolls in a radiant deluge o'er the land;
Should this bright stream, the least inflected, point
Its course another way, o'er other lands
The various treasure would resistless pour,
Ne'er to be won again; its ancient tract
Left a vile channel, desolate, and dead,
With all around a miserable waste.
Not Egypt, were her better heaven, the Nile,
Turned in the pride of flow; when o'er his rocks,
And roaring cataracts, beyond the reach
Of dizzy vision piled, in one wide flash

An Ethiopian deluge foams amain;
(Whence wondering fable traced him from the sky;)
Even not that prime of earth, where harvests crowd
On untilled harvests, all the teeming year,
If of the fat o'erflowing culture robbed,
Were then a more uncomfortable wild,
Sterile, and void; than of her trade deprived,
Britons, your boasted isle: her princes sunk;
Her high built honour mouldered to the dust;
Unnerved her force; her spirit vanished quite;
With rapid wing her riches fled away;
Her unfrequented ports alone the sign
Of what she was; her merchants scattered wide;
Her hollow shops shut up; and in her streets,
Her fields, woods, markets, villages, and roads,
The cheerful voice of labour heard no more.
"Oh, let not then waste luxury impair
That manly soul of toil which strings your nerves,
And your own proper happiness creates!
Oh, let not the soft, penetrating plague
Creep on the freeborn mind! and working there,
With the sharp tooth of many a new-formed want,
Endless, and idle all, eat out the heart
Of liberty; the high conception blast;
The noble sentiment, the impatient scorn
Of base subjection, and the swelling wish
For general good, erasing from the mind:
While nought save narrow selfishness succeeds,
And low design, the sneaking passions all
Let loose, and reigning in the rankled breast.
Induced at last, by scarce perceived degrees,
Sapping the very frame of government,
And life, a total dissolution comes;
Sloth, ignorance, dejection, flattery, fear.

Oppression raging o'er the waste he makes;
The human being almost quite extinct;
And the whole state in broad corruption sinks.
Oh, shun that gulf: that gaping ruin shun!
And countless ages roll it far away
From you, ye heaven-beloved! May liberty,
The light of life! the sun of humankind!
Whence heroes, bards, and patriots borrow flame,
Even where the keen depressive north descends,
Still spread, exalt, and actuate your powers!
While slavish southern climates beam in vain.
And may a public spirit from the throne,
Where every virtue sits, go copious forth,
Live o'er the land! the finer arts inspire;
Make thoughtful Science raise his pensive head,
Blow the fresh bay, bid Industry rejoice,
And the rough sons of lowest labour smile.
As when, profuse of Spring, the loosened west
Lifts up the pining year, and balmy breathes
Youth, life, and love, and beauty, o'er the world.
"But haste we from these melancholy shores,
Nor to deaf winds, and waves, our fruitless plaint
Pour weak; the country claims our active aid;
That let us roam; and where we find a spark
Of public virtue, blow it into flame.
Lo! now, my sons, the sons of freedom! meet
In awful senate; thither let us fly;
Burn in the patriot's thought, flow from his tongue
In fearless truth; myself transformed, preside,
And shed the spirit of Britannia round."
This said; her fleeting form and airy train
Sunk in the gale; and nought but ragged rocks
Rushed on the broken eye; and nought was heard
But the rough cadence of the dashing wave.

A

POEM

TO THE MEMORY OF

MR. CONGREVE.

INSCRIBED TO HER GRACE,

HENRIETTA,

DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.

LONDON:
Printed for J. MILLAN, and ſold at his Shop near the
Horſe-guards, 1729.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE author of the following poem, not having had the happiness of a personal acquaintance with Mr. Congreve, is sensible that he has drawn his private character very imperfectly. This all his friends will readily discover: and, therefore, if any one of them had thought fit to do justice to those amiable qualifications, which made him the love and admiration of all that knew him, these verses had never seen the light.

[1729.]

A POEM TO THE MEMORY OF MR. CONGREVE.*

OFT has the muse, with mean attempt, employed
Her heaven-born voice to flatter prosperous guilt,
Or trivial greatness; often stooped her song
To soothe ambition in his frantic rage,
The dire destroyer, while a bleeding world
Wept o'er his crimes. Of this pernicious skill
Unknowing I, these voluntary lays
To genuine worth devote; to worth by all
Confessed and mourned; to Congreve now no more.
First of the fairer kind! by heaven adorned
With every nobler praise; whose smile can lift

* This unacknowledged poem of Thomson's was first pointed out by the late Rev. H. J. Cary, the accomplished translator of Dante, to Mr. P. Cunningham, who edited it for the Percy Society in 1843, stating in the preface the grounds upon which he assigned it to Thomson. Few will be disposed to doubt the conclusions arrived at by such an authority. Congreve died at his house, Surrey-street, Strand, January 19, 1729.

The muse unknown to fame, indulgent now
Permit her strain, ennobled by a name,
To all the better few, and chief to thee,
Bright Marlborough,* ever sacred, ever dear.
Lamented shade! in him the comic muse,
Parent of gay instruction, lost her loved,
Her last remaining hope; and pensive now
Resigns to folly, and his mimic rout,
Her throne usurped: presage of darker times,
And deeper woes to come! with taste declined
Fallen virtue droops; and o'er the ill-omened age,
Unseen, unfeared, impend the thousand ills
That wait on ignorance: no Congreve now
To scourge our crimes, or laugh to scorn our fools,
A new and nameless herd. Nature was his,
Bold, sprightly, various; and superior art,
Curious to choose each better grace, unseen
Of vulgar eyes; with delicacy free,
Though laboured happy, and though strong refined.
Judgment, severely cool, o'erlooked his toil,
And patient finished all; each fair design
With freedom regular, correctly great,
A master's skilful daring. Closely wrought
His meaning fable, with deep art perplexed,
With striking ease unravelled; no thin plot
Seen through at once and scorned; or ill-concealed
By borrowed aids of mimicry and farce.
His character's strong-featured, equal, just,

* Henrietta, eldest surviving daughter of the great duke of Marlborough, whom, according to the terms of the peerage, she succeeded in the title. She lived on terms of great intimacy and affection with Congreve, who left her £10,000 in his will, and to whom she erected the monument in Westminster Abbey.

From finer nature drawn; and all the mind
Through all her mazes traced; each darker vice,
And darling folly, under each disguise,
By either sex assumed, of studied ease,
False friendship, loose severity, vain wit,
Dull briskness, shallow depth, or coward rage.
Of the whole muse possessed, his piercing eye
Discerned each richer vein of genuine mirth,
Humour or wit; where differing, where agreed;
How counterfeited, or by folly's grin,
Or affectation's air; and what their force
To please, to move, to shake the ravished scene
With laughter unreproved. To him the soul,
In all her higher workings, too was known;
What passion's tumult there; whence their prompt spring,
Their sudden flood of rage, and gradual fall;
Infinite motion! source supreme of bliss,
Or woe to man; our heaven, or hell, below!
Such was his public name; nor less allowed
His private worth; by nature made for praise.
A pleasing form; a soul sincere and clear,
Where all the human graces mixed their charms,
Pure candour, easy goodness, open truth,
Spontaneous all: where strength and beauty joined,
With wit indulgent; humble in the height
Of envied honours; and, but rarely found,
The unjealous friend of every rival worth.
Adorned for social life, each talent his
To win each heart; the charm of happy ease,
Free mirth, gay learning, ever smiling wit,
To all endeared, a pleasure without pain;

What Halifax* approved, and Marlborough mourns.
Not so the illiberal mind, where knowledge dwells,
Uncouth and harsh, with her attendant, pride,
Impatient of attention, prone to blame,
Disdaining to be pleased; condemning all,
By all condemned; for social joys unfit,
In solitude self-cursed, the child of spleen.
Obliged, ungrateful; unobliged, a foe,
Poor, vicious, old; such fierce-eyed Asper was.
Now meaner Cenus,† trivial with design,
Courts poor applause by levity of face,
And scorn of serious thought; to mischief prompt,
Though impotent to wound; profuse of wealth
Yet friendless and unloved; vain, fluttering, false,
A vacant head, and an ungenerous heart.
But slighting these ignoble names, the muse
Pursues her favourite son, and sees him now,
From this dim spot enlarged, triumphant soar,
Beyond the walk of Time to better worlds,
Where all is new, all wondrous, and all blest!
What art thou death! by mankind poorly feared,
Yet period of their ills. On thy near shore,
Trembling they stand, and see through dreaded mists
The eternal port, irresolute to leave
This various misery, these air-fed dreams
Which men call life, and fame. Mistaken minds!
'Tis reason's prime aspiring, greatly just;

* Charles Montague, earl of Halifax, Congreve's great friend and patron.

† It is uncertain who are meant by Asper and Cenus; the former has been ascribed to John Dennis, the latter to Aaron Hill.

'Tis happiness supreme, to venture forth
In quest of nobler worlds; to try the deeps
Of dark futurity, with Heaven our guide,
The unerring Hand that led us safe through time;
That planted in the soul this powerful hope,
This infinite ambition of new life,
And endless joys, still rising, ever new.

These Congreve tastes, safe on the ethereal coast,
Joined to the numberless, immortal quire
Of spirits blest. High-seated among these,
He sees the public fathers of mankind,
The greatly good, those universal minds,
Who drew the sword, or planned the holy scheme,
For liberty and right; to check the rage
Of blood-stained tyranny, and save a world.
Such, high-born Marlborough, be thy sire divine
With wonder named; fair freedom's champion he,
By Heaven approved, a conqueror without guilt,
And such, on earth his friend, and joined on high
By deathless love, Godolphin's* patriot worth,
Just to his country's fame, yet of her wealth
With honour frugal; above interest great.
Hail men immortal! social virtues hail!
First heirs of praise!—But I, with weak essay,
Wrong the superior theme; while heavenly quires,
In strains high-warbled to celestial-harps,
Resound your names; and Congreve's added voice
In Heaven exalts what he admired below.

With these he mixes, now no more to swerve

* Sidney Godolphin, earl of Godolphin, the great friend and colleague of the Duke of Marlborough, he died 1712. The Duchess of Marlborough, to whom this Poem is dedicated, married his son, the second Earl.

From reason's purest law; no more to please,
Borne by the torrent down, a sensual age.
Pardon, loved shade, that I with friendly blame
Slight note thy error; not to wrong thy worth,
Or shade thy memory, (far from my soul
Be that base aim) but haply to deter,
From flattering the gross vulgar, future pens,
Powerful like thine in every grace, and skilled
To win the listening soul with virtuous charms.
If manly thought and wit refined may hope
To please an age, in aimless folly sunk,
And sliding swift into the depth of vice.*
Consuming pleasure leads the gay and young
Through their vain round, and venal faith the old,
Or avarice mean of soul; instructive arts
Pursued no more; the general taste extinct,
Or all debased; even sacred liberty
The great man's jest, and Britain's welfare named,
By her degenerate sons, the poet's dream,
Or fancy's air-built vision, gaily vain.
Such the lost age; yet still the muse can find,
Superior and apart, a sacred band,
Heroic virtues, who ne'er bowed the knee
To sordid interest; who dare greatly claim
The privilege of men, unfearing truth,
And freedom, heaven's first gift; the ennobling bliss
That renders life of price, and cheaply saved
At life's expense; our sum of happiness.
On these the drooping Muses fix their eyes;

* Mr. P. Cunningham suggests that in order to make sense of these three lines, they should belong to the preceding paragraph.

From these expect their ancient fame restored.
Nor will the hope be vain; the public weal
With their's fast linked; a generous truth concealed
From narrow-thoughted power, and known alone
To souls of highest rank. With these, the fair
Be joined in just applause; the brighter few,
Who raised above gay folly, and the whirl
Of fond amusements, emulate thy praise,
Illustrious Marlborough; pleased, like thee, to shine
Propitious on the muse; whose charms inspire
Her noblest raptures, and whose goodness crowns.

THE HAPPY MAN.*

HE'S not the happy man, to whom is given
A plenteous fortune by indulgent Heaven;
Whose gilded roofs on shining columns rise,
And painted walls enchant the gazer's eyes;
Whose table flows with hospitable cheer,
And all the various bounty of the year;
Whose valleys smile, whose gardens breathe the Spring,
Whose carved mountains bleat, and forests sing?
For whom the cooling shade in Summer twines,

* First printed in Miscellaneous Poems, edited by Mr. Ralph, 1729; it was addressed to Mr. Dodington, to whom he had previously dedicated "Summer;" see Memoir, p. clxxi.

While his full cellars give their generous wines;
From whose wide fields unbounded Autumn pours
A golden tide into his swelling stores:
Whose Winter laughs; for whom the liberal gales
Stretch the big sheet, and toiling commerce sails;
When yielding crowds attend, and pleasure serves;
While youth, and health, and vigour string his nerves.
Even not all these, in one rich lot combined,
Can make the happy man, without the mind;
Where judgment sits clear-sighted, and surveys
The chain of reason with unerring gaze;
Where fancy lives, and to the brightening eyes,
Bids fairer scenes, and bolder figures rise;
Where social love exerts her soft command,
And lays the passions with a tender hand,
Whence every virtue flows, in rival strife,
And all the moral harmony of life.

Nor canst thou, Dodington, this truth decline,
Thine is the fortune, and the mind is thine.

HYMN ON SOLITUDE.*

HAIL, mildly pleasing Solitude,
Companion of the wise and good;
But, from whose holy, piercing eye,
The herd of fools and villains fly.

* The first draft of this poem will be found in Thomson's letter to Mallet, dated July 10, 1725; for which see vol. I. p. cxliii. It was first printed, with very many alterations, in 1729, in the Miscellaneous Poems, edited by Mr. Ralph, and

Oh! how I love with thee to walk,
And listen to thy whispered talk,
Which innocence and truth imparts,
And melts the most obdurate hearts.

A thousand shapes you wear with ease,
And still in every shape you please.
Now wrapt in some mysterious dream,
A lone philosopher you seem;
Now quick from hill to vale you fly,
And now you sweep the vaulted sky;
A shepherd next, you haunt the plain,
And warble forth your oaten strain.
A lover now, with all the grace
Of that sweet passion in your face;
Then, calmed to friendship, you assume
The gentle looking Hertford's bloom.
As, with her Musidora, she
(Her Musidora fond of thee)
Amid the long-withdrawing vale,
Awakes the rivalled nightingale.

Thine is the balmy breath of morn,
Just as the dew-bent rose is born;
And while meridian fervors beat,
Thine is the woodland dumb retreat;
But chief, when evening scenes decay,
And the faint landscape swims away,
Thine is the doubtful soft decline,
And that best hour of musing thine.

the same version occurs in Dodsley's Poems, vol. III. 1748; the author seems finally to have revised it as here printed, in which form it appears in the edition of his works published in 1750.

Descending angels bless thy train,
The virtues of the sage, and swain;
Plain Innocence in white arrayed
Before thee lifts her fearless head;
Religion's beams around thee shine,
And cheer thy glooms with light divine:
About thee sports sweet Liberty;
And wrapt Urania sings to thee.

Oh, let me pierce thy secret cell!
And in thy deep recesses dwell;
Perhaps from Norwood's oak-clad hill,
When meditation has her fill,
I just may cast my careless eyes,
Where London's spiry turrets rise,
Think of its crimes, its cares, its pain,
Then shield me in the woods again.

A PARAPHRASE

ON THE LATTER PART OF THE SIXTH CHAPTER OF ST. MATTHEW.*

HEN my breast labours with oppressive care,
And o'er my cheek descends the falling tear;
While all my warring passions are at strife,
Oh, let me listen to the words of life!

* First printed in Miscellaneous Poems, edited by Mr. Ralph, in 1729.

Raptures deep-felt His doctrine did impart,
And thus he raised from earth the drooping heart.
"Think not, when all your scanty stores afford
Is spread at once upon the sparing board;
Think not, when worn the homely robe appears,
While, on the roof, the howling tempest bears;
What farther shall this feeble life sustain,
And what shall clothe these shivering limbs again.
Say, does not life its nourishment exceed?
And the fair body its investing weed?
"Behold! and look away your low despair—
See the light tenants of the barren air:
To them, nor stores, nor granaries belong,
Nought, but the woodland, and the pleasing song;
Yet, your kind heavenly Father bends His eye
On the least wing that flits along the sky.
To Him they sing, when Spring renews the plain,
To Him they cry, in Winter's pinching reign;
Nor is their music, nor their plaint in vain.
He hears the gay and the distressful call,
And with unsparing bounty fills them all.
"Observe the rising lily's snowy grace;
Observe the various vegetable race;
They neither toil, nor spin, but careless grow;
Yet see how warm they blush! how bright they glow!
What regal vestments can with them compare!
What king so shining! and what queen so fair!
If, ceaseless, thus the fowls of heaven He feeds,
If o'er the fields such lucid robes He spreads;
Will He not care for you, ye faithless, say?
Is He unwise? or are ye less than they?"

THE INCOMPARABLE SOPORIFIC DOCTOR.*

[Dr. Patrick Murdoch. See Memoir, p. lxxix.]

WEET, sleeky Doctor! dear pacific soul!
Lay at the beef, and suck the vital bowl!
Still let the involving smoke around thee fly,
And broad-looked dulness settle in thine eye.
Ah! soft in down these dainty limbs repose,
And in the very lap of slumber doze;
But chiefly on the lazy day of grace,
Call forth the lambent glories of thy face;
If aught the thoughts of dinner can prevail—
And sure the Sunday's dinner cannot fail.
To the thin church in sleepy pomp proceed,
And lean on the lethargic book thy head.
These eyes wipe often with the hallowed lawn,
Profoundly nod, immeasurably yawn.
Slow let the prayers by thy meek lips be sung,
Nor let thy thoughts be distanced by thy tongue;
If ere the lingerers are within a call,
Or if on prayers thou deign'st to think at all.
Yet—only yet—the swimming head we bend;
But when serene, the pulpit you ascend,
Through every joint a gentle horror creeps,
And round you the consenting audience sleeps.

* First printed in Miscellaneous Poems, edited by Mr. Ralph, in 1729.

So when an ass with sluggish front appears,
The horses start, and prick their quivering ears;
But soon as e'er the sage is heard to bray,
The fields all thunder, and they bound away.

ON THE DEATH OF MR. AIKMAN.*

H, could I draw, my friend, thy genuine mind,
Just as the living forms by thee designed;
Of Raphael's figures none should fairer shine,
Nor Titian's colours longer last than mine.
A mind in wisdom old, in lenience young,
From fervent truth where every virtue sprung;
Where all was real, modest, plain, sincere;
Worth above show, and goodness unsevere:
Viewed round and round, as lucid diamonds throw
Still as you turn them, a revolving glow,

* This poem was written at the time of Mr. Aikman's death, June, 1731; see Memoir, p. xxx. The last eight lines only were printed in 1750; it was first published as it now stands in 1792, from a manuscript belonging to the Earl of Buchan. Mr. Aikman was born in Scotland, and was designed for the profession of the law; but went to Italy, and returned a painter. He was patronized in Scotland by the Duke of Argyle, and afterwards met with encouragement to settle in London; but falling into a long and languishing disease, he died at his home in Leicester Fields, aged 50. Boyse wrote a panegyric upon him, and Mallet an epitaph. See Walpole's Anecdotes, vol. iv. p. 41.

So did his mind reflect with secret ray,
In various virtues, Heaven's internal day;
Whether in high discourse it soared sublime
And sprung impatient o'er the bounds of time,
Or wandering nature through with raptured eye,
Adored the Hand that turned yon azure sky:
Whether to social life he bent his thought,
And the right poise of mingling passions sought,
Gay converse blest; or in the thoughtful grove
Bid the heart open every source of love:
New varying lights still set before your eyes
The just, the good, the social, or the wise.
For such a death who can, who would refuse
The friend a tear, a verse the mournful muse?
Yet pay we just acknowledgment to heaven,
Though snatched so soon, that Aikman e'er was given.
A friend, when dead, is but removed from sight,
Hid in the lustre of eternal light:
Oft with the mind he wonted converse keeps
In the lone walk, or when the body sleeps
Lets in a wandering ray, and all elate
Wings and attracts her to another state;
And, when the parting storms of life are o'er,
May yet rejoin him in a happier shore.
As those we love decay, we die in part,
String after string is severed from the heart;
Till loosened life at last—but breathing clay,
Without one pang, is glad to fall away.
Unhappy he who latest feels the blow,
Whose eyes have wept o'er every friend laid low,
Dragged lingering on from partial death to death;
Till dying, all he can resign is breath.

ON THE REPORT OF A WOODEN BRIDGE TO BE BUILT AT WESTMINSTER.*

BY Rufus' hall, where Thames polluted flows,
Provoked, the Genius of the river rose,
And thus exclaimed: "Have I, ye British swains,
Have I for ages laved your fertile plains?
Given herds, and flocks, and villages increase,
And fed a richer than the golden fleece?
Have I, ye merchants, with each swelling tide,
Poured Afric's treasure in, and India's pride?
Lent you the fruit of every nation's toil?
Made every climate yours, and every soil?
Yet, pilfered from the poor, by gaming base,
Yet must a wooden bridge my waves disgrace?
Tell not to foreign streams the shameful tale,
And be it published in no Gallic vale."
He said;—and plunging to his crystal dome,
While o'er his head the circling waters foam.

* First printed in the Gentleman's Magazine, 1737; and afterwards in Dodsley's Poems, vol. iv. p. 130, 1748.

A POEM,

TO THE MEMORY OF THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD TALBOT,*

LATE CHANCELLOR OF GREAT BRITAIN.

[DEDICATED TO HIS SON, "THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD TALBOT."]

WHILE with the public, you, my Lord, lament
A friend and father lost; permit the Muse,
The Muse assigned of old a double theme,
To praise dead worth and humble living pride,
Whose generous task begins where interest ends;
Permit her on a Talbot's tomb to lay
This cordial verse sincere, by truth inspired,
Which means not to bestow but borrow fame.

* Lord Chancellor Talbot died 14th February, 1737, and this poem was first printed in the following June. The text here followed is that of 1744, as it was left at the Author's death; that of 1750 differs in several ways, and omits seventeen lines; but it is doubtful whether these alterations were made by Thomson.

Yes, she may sing his matchless virtues now—
Unhappy that she may!—But where begin?
How from the diamond single out each ray,
That, though they tremble with ten thousand hues,
Effuse one poignant undivided light?
Let the low-minded of these narrow days
No more presume to deem the lofty tale
Of ancient times, in pity to their own,
Romance. In Talbot we united saw
The piercing eye, the quick enlightened soul
The graceful ease, the flowing tongue of Greece,
Joined to the virtues and the force of Rome.
Eternal Wisdom, that all-quickening sun,
Whence every life, in just proportion, draws
Directing light and actuating flame,
Ne'er with a larger portion of its beams
Awakened immortal clay. Hence steady, calm,
Diffusive, deep, and clear, his reason saw,
With instantaneous view, the truth of things;
Chief what to human life and human bliss
Pertains, that kindest science, fit for man:
And hence, responsive to his knowledge, glowed
His ardent virtue. Ignorance and vice,
In consort foul, agree; each heightening each;
While virtue draws from knowledge nobler fire,
Is knowledge of true pleasure proved by deeds.
What grand, what comely, and what tender sense,
What talent, and what virtue was not his?
All that can render man or great, or good,
Give useful worth, or amiable grace?
Nor could he brook in studious shade to lie,
In soft retirement, indolently pleased
With selfish peace. The Syren of the wise,

(Who steals the Aonian song, and in the shape
Of Virtue, woos them from a worthless world)
Though deep he felt her charms, could never melt
His strenuous spirit, recollected, calm,
As silent night, yet active as the day.
The more the bold, the bustling, and the bad,
Usurp the reins of power, the more behoves,
Becomes it virtue, with indignant zeal,
To check their conjuration. Shall low views
Of sneaking interest or luxurious vice,
The villain's passions quicken more to toil,
And dart a livelier vigour through the soul,
Than those that mingled with our truest good,
With present honour and immortal fame,
Involve the good of all? An empty form
Vain is the virtue, that amid the shade
Lamenting lies, with future schemes amused,
While wickedness and folly, kindred powers,
Confound the world. A Talbot's, different far,
Sprung into action: action, that disdained
To lose in death-like sloth one pulse of life,
That might be saved; disdained for coward ease,
And her insipid pleasures, to resign
The prize of glory, the keen sweets of toil,
And those high joys that teach the truly great
To live for others, and for others die.
Early, behold! he breaks benign on life.
Not breathing more beneficence, the spring
Leads in her swelling train the gentle airs:
While gay, behind her, smiles the kindling waste
Of ruffian storms and Winter's lawless rage.
In him Astrea, to this dim abode
Of ever-wandering men, returned again:

To bless them his delight, to bring them back
From thorny error, from unjoyous wrong,
Into the paths of kind primeval faith,
Of happiness and justice. All his parts,
His virtues all, collected, sought the good
Of humankind. For that he, fervent, felt
The throb of patriots, when they model states:
Anxious for that, nor needful sleep could hold
His still-awakened soul; nor friends had charms
To steal, with pleasing guile, an healing hour;
Toil knew no languor, no attraction joy.
The common father such of erring men!
A froward race! incessant in pursuit
Of flying good, or of fallacious bliss;
Still as they thwart and mingle in the chace,
Now fraud, now force, now cruelty and crimes,
Attempting all to seize a brother's prize;
He sits superior to the little fray,
Detects the legal snares of mazy guile,
With the proud mighty bids the feeble cope,
And into social life the villain daunts.
Be named, victorious ravagers, no more!
Vanish, ye human comets! shrink your blaze!
Ye that your glory to your terrors owe,
As, o'er the gazing desolated earth,
You scatter famine, pestilence, and war;
Vanish! before this vernal sun of fame;
Effulgent sweetness! beaming life and joy.

How the heart listened while he, pleading, spoke!
While on the enlightened mind, with winning art,
His gentle reason so persuasive stole,
That the charmed hearer thought it was his own.
Ah! when, ye studious of the laws, again

Shall such enchanting lessons bless your ear?
When shall again the darkest truths, perplexed,
Be set in ample day? Again the harsh
And arduous open into smiling ease?
The solid mix with elegant delight?
To him the purest eloquence indulged
Eternal treasure, light and heat combined,
At once to pour conviction on the soul,
And mould, with lawful flame, the impassioned heat.
That dangerous gift, which to the strictly just,
And good alone, belongs, lay safe with him
Reposed. He sacred to his country's cause,
To trampled want and worth, to suffering right,
To the lone widow's and her orphan's woes,
Reserved the mighty charm. With equal brow,
Despising then the smiles or frowns of power,
He all that noblest eloquence effused,
Which wakes the tender or exalting tear,
When generous passions, taught by reason, speak.
Then spoke the man; and over barren art,
Prevailed abundant nature. Freedom then
His client was, humanity and truth.

Placed on the seat of justice, there he reigned,
In a superior sphere of cloudless day,
A pure intelligence. No tumult there,
No dark emotion, no intemperate heat,
No passion e'er disturbed the clear serene
That round him spread. A zeal for right alone,
The love of justice, like the steady sun,
Unbating ardour lent; and now and then,
Against the sons of violence, of pride,
And bold deceit, his indignation gleamed,
As intuition quick, he snatched the truth,

Yet with progressive patience, step by step,
Self-diffident, or to the slower kind,
He through the maze of falsehood traced it on,
Till, at the last, evolved, it full appeared,
And e'en the loser owned the just decree.
But when, in senates, he, to freedom firm,
Enlightened Freedom, planned salubrious laws,
His various learning, his wide knowledge, then,
His insight deep into Britannia's weal,
Spontaneous seemed from simple sense to flow,
And the plain patriot smoothed the brow of law.
No specious swell, no frothy pomp of words
Fell on the cheated ear; no studied maze
Of declamation, to perplex the right,
He darkening threw around: safe in itself,
In its own force, almighty Reason spoke;
While on the great the ruling point, at once,
He streamed decisive day, and showed it vain
To lengthen farther out the clear debate.
Conviction breathes conviction; to the heart,
Poured ardent forth in eloquence unbid,
The heart attends: for let the venal try
Their every hardening stupifying art,
Truth must prevail, zeal will enkindle zeal,
And Nature, skilful touched, is honest still.
Behold him in the councils of his prince.
What faithful light he lends! How rare, in courts,
Such wisdom! such abilities! and joined
To virtue so determined, public zeal,
And honour of such adamantine proof,
As even corruption, hopeless and o'erawed,
Durst not have tempted! yet of manners mild,
And winning every heart, he knew to please,

Nobly to please; while equally he scorned
Or adulation to receive, or give.
Happy the state, where wakes a ruling eye
Of such inspection keen, and general care!
Beneath a guard so vigilant, so pure,
All-trusted, all-revered, and all-beloved,
Toil may resign his careless head to rest,
And ever-jealous freedom sleep in peace.
Ah! lost untimely! lost in downward days!
And many a patriot-counsel with him lost!
Counsels, that might have humbled Britain's foe,
Her native foe, from eldest time by fate
Appointed, as did once a Talbot's arms.
Let learning, arts, let universal worth,
Lament a patron lost, a friend and judge,
Unlike the sons of vanity, that, veiled
Beneath the patron's prostituted name,
Dare sacrifice a worthy man to pride,
And flush confusion o'er an honest cheek.
Obliged when he obliged, it seemed a debt
Which he to merit, to the public, paid,
That can alone, by virtue, stationed high,
Recover fame; to his own heart a debt
And to the great all-bounteous Source of good!
The gracious flood, that cheers the lettered world,
Is not the noisy gift of summer's noon,
Whose sudden current, from the naked root,
Washes the little soil which yet remained,
And only more dejects the blushing flowers:
No, 'tis the soft-descending dews at eve,
The silent treasures of the vernal year,
Indulging deep their stores, the still night long;
Till, with returning morn, the freshened world,

Is fragrance all, all beauty, joy, and song.
Still let me view him in the pleasing light
Of private life, where pomp forgets to glare,
And where the plain unguarded soul is seen.
Not only there most amiable, best,
But with that truest greatness he appeared,
Which thinks not of appearing; kindly veiled
In the soft graces of the friendly scene,
Inspiring social confidence and ease.
As free the converse of the wise and good,
As joyous, disentangling every power,
And breathing mixed improvement with delight,
As when amid the various-blossomed spring,
Or gentle beaming autumn's pensive shade,
The philosophic mind with nature talks.
Say ye, his sons, his dear remains, with whom
The father laid superfluous state aside,
Yet swelled your filial duty thence the more,
With friendship swelled it, with esteem, with love,
Beyond the ties of blood, oh! speak the joy,
The pure serene, the cheerful wisdom mild,
The virtuous spirit, which his vacant hours,
In semblance of amusement, through the breast
Infused. And thou, O Rundle!* lend thy strain,
Thou darling friend! thou brother of his soul!
In whom the head and heart their stores unite:
Whatever fancy paints, invention pours,
Judgment digests, the well tuned bosom feels,
Truth natural, moral, or divine, has taught,
The virtues dictate, or the Muses sing.
Lend me the plaint, which, to the lonely main,

* Dr. Rundle, sometime Bishop of Derry. See Memoir, p. lxxxi.

With memory conversing, you will pour,
As on the pebbled shore you, pensive, stray,
Where Derry's mountains a bleak crescent form,
And mid their ample round receive the waves,
That from the frozen pole, resounding, rush,
Impetuous. Though from native sunshine driven,
Driven from your friends, the sunshine of the soul,
By slanderous zeal, and politics infirm,
Jealous of worth; yet will you bless your lot,
Yet will you triumph in your glorious fate,
Whence Talbot's friendship glows to future times,
Intrepid, warm; of kindred tempers born;
Nursed, by experience, into slow esteem,
Calm confidence unbounded, love not blind,
And the sweet light from mingled minds disclosed,
From mingled chymic oils as bursts the fire.
I too remember well that cheerful bowl,
Which round his table flowed. The serious there
Mixed with the sportive, with the learned the plain;
Mirth softened wisdom, candour tempered mirth;
And wit its honey lent, without the sting.
Not simple nature's unaffected sons,
The blameless Indians, round their forest cheer,
In sunny lawn or shady covert set,
Hold more unspotted converse; nor, of old,
Rome's awful consuls, her dictator-swains,
As on the product of their Sabine farms
They fared, with stricter virtue fed the soul:
Nor yet in Athens, at an Attic meal,
Where Socrates presided, fairer truth,
More elegant humanity, more grace,
Wit more refined, or deeper science reigned.
But far beyond the little vulgar bounds

Of family, of friends, of country, kind,
By just degrees, and with proportioned flame,
Extended his benevolence: a friend
To humankind, to parent nature's works.
Of free access, and of engaging grace,
Such as a brother to a brother owes,
He kept an open judging-ear for all,
And spread an open countenance, where smiled
The fair effulgence of an open heart;
While on the rich, the poor, the high, the low
With equal ray, his ready goodness shone:
For "nothing human foreign was to him."
Thus to a dread inheritance, my Lord,
And hard to be supported, you succeed:
But, kept by virtue, as by virtue gained,
It will, through latest time, enrich your race,
When grosser wealth shall moulder into dust,
And with their authors in oblivion sunk
Vain titles lie, the servile badges oft
Of mean submission, not the meed of worth.
True genuine honour its large patent holds
Of all mankind, through every land and age,
Of universal reason's various sons,
And even of God himself, sole perfect Judge!
Who sees with other eyes than flattering men.
Meantime these noblest honours of the mind
On rigid terms descend: the high-placed heir,
Scanned by the public eye, that, with keen gaze,
Malignant seeks out faults, cannot through life,
Amid the nameless insects of a court,
If such to life belong, unheeded, steal.
He must be glorious, or he must be base.
This truth to you, who merit well to bear

A name to Britons dear, the officious Muse
May safely sing, and sing without reserve.
Vain were the plaint, and ignorant the tear
That should a Talbot mourn. Ourselves, indeed,
Our sinking country, humankind enslaved,
We may lament. But let us, grateful, joy
That 'ere such virtues gave our days to shine,
Above the dark abyss of modern time,
That we such virtues knew, such virtues felt,
And feel them still, teaching our views to rise
Through ever-brightening scenes of future worlds.
Be dumb, ye worst of zealots! ye that, prone
To thoughtless dust, renounce that generous hope,
Whence every joy below its spirit draws,
And every pain its balm: a Talbot's light,
A Talbot's virtues claim another source
Than the blind maze of undesigning blood;
Nor when that vital fountain plays no more,
Can they be quenched amid the gelid stream.
Methinks I see his mounting spirit, freed
From tangling earth, regain the realms of day,
Its native country: whence to bless mankind,
Eternal goodness on this darksome spot
Had rayed it down a while. Behold! approved
By the tremendous Judge of heaven and earth
And to the Almighty Father's presence joined,
Whose smile creative beams superior life,
He takes his rank, in glory, and in bliss,
Amid the human worthies. Glad around
Crowd his compatriot shades, and point him out,
With noble pride, Britannia's blameless boast.
Ah! who is he, that with a fonder eye

Meets thine enraptured?—'Tis the best of sons!
The best of friends!——Too soon is realized
That hope, which once forbad thy tears to flow!
Meanwhile the kindred souls of every land,
(Howe'er divided in the fretful days
Of prejudice and error) mingled now,
In one selected never-jarring state,
Where God himself their only Monarch reigns,
Partake the joy; yet, such the sense that still
Remains of earthly woes, for us below,
And for our loss, they drop a pitying tear.
But cease, presumptuous Muse, nor vainly strive
To quit this cloudy sphere, that binds thee down:
'Tis not for mortal hand to trace these scenes—
Scenes, that our gross ideas grovelling cast
Behind, and strike our boldest language dumb.
Forgive, immortal shade! if aught from earth,
From dust, low-warbled, to those groves can rise,
Where flows unbidden harmony, forgive
This fond superfluous verse. With deep-felt voice,
On every heart impressed, thy deeds themselves
Attest thy praise. Thy praise the widow's sighs,
And orphan's tears embalm. The good, the bad,
The sons of justice and the sons of strife,
All that or freedom or that interest prize,
A deep-divided nation's parties all,
Conspire to swell thy spotless praise to Heaven.
They catch it there; and, to seraphic lyre,
Celestial voices thy arrival hail.
How vain this tribute then! this lowly lay!
Yet nothing vain which gratitude inspires.
The Muse, besides, her duty thus approves

To virtue, to her country, to mankind,
To forming nature, that, in glorious charge,
As to her priestess, has it given to hymn
Whatever good and excellent she forms.

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES.*

[ON THE BIRTH OF HIS FIRST CHILD, THE PRINCESS AUGUSTA, JULY 31, 1737.]

WHILE secret-leaguing nations frown around,
Ready to pour the long-expected storm;
While she, who wont the restless Gaul to bound,
Britannia, drooping, grows an empty form;
While on our vitals selfish parties prey,
And deep corruption eats our soul away:

Yet in the Goddess of the Main appears
A gleam of joy, gay-flushing every grace,
As she the cordial voice of millions hears,
Rejoicing, zealous, o'er thy rising race:
Straight her rekindling eyes resume their fire,
The Virtues smile, the Muses tune the lyre.

But more enchanting than the Muse's song,
United Britons thy dear offspring hail:

* First printed in the Gentleman's Magazine, Sept. 1737.

The city triumphs through her glowing throng,
The shepherd tells his transport to the dale;
The sons of roughest toil forget their pain,
And the glad sailor cheers the midnight main.

Can aught from fair Augusta's gentle blood,
And thine, thou friend of liberty! be born:
Can aught save what is lovely, generous, good;
What will, at once, defend us, and adorn?
From thence prophetic joy new Edwards eyes,
New Henries, Annas, and Elizas rise.

May fate my fond devoted days extend,
To sing the promised glories of thy reign! [bend;
What though, by years depressed, my Muse might
My heart will teach her still a nobler strain:
How, with recovered Britain, will she soar,
When France insults, and Spain shall rob no more.

EPITAPH ON MISS STANLEY,*

IN HOLYROOD CHURCH, SOUTHAMPTON.

E. S.

ONCE a lively image of human nature,
Such as God made it
When he pronounced every work of his
to be good.

* This is the lady so feelingly alluded to in "Summer," p. 60. She was daughter of George Stanley, Esq., of Poultons, Hants, by Sarah, eldest daughter of Sir Hans Sloane; she died 1738. The monument is by Rysbrach.

To the memory of Elizabeth Stanley,
Daughter of George and Sarah Stanley;
Who to all the beauty, modesty,
And gentleness of nature,
That ever adorned the most amiable woman,
Joined all the fortitude, elevation,
And vigour of mind,
That ever exalted the most heroical man;
Who having lived the pride and delight of her parents,
The joy, the consolation, the pattern of her friends,
A mistress not only of the English and French,
But in a high degree of the Greek and Roman learning,
Without vanity or pedantry,
At the age of eighteen,
After a tedious, painful, desperate illness,
Which, with a Roman spirit,
And a Christian resignation,
She endured so calmly, that she seemed insensible
To all pain and suffering, except that of her friends,
Gave up her innocent soul to her Creator,
And left to her mother, who erected this monument,
The memory of her virtues for her greatest support;
Virtues which, in her sex and station of life,
Were all that could be practised,
And more than will be believed,
Except by those who know what this inscription relates.

Here, Stanley, rest! escaped this mortal strife,
Above the joys, beyond the woes of life,

Fierce pangs no more thy lively beauties stain,
And sternly try thee with a year of pain;
No more sweet patience, feigning oft relief,
Lights thy sick eye, to cheat a parent's grief:
With tender art to save her anxious groan,
No more thy bosom presses down its own:
Now well earned peace is thine, and bliss sincere:
Ours be the lenient, not unpleasing tear!

O born to bloom, then sink beneath the storm!
To show us virtue in her fairest form;
To show us artless reason's moral reign,
What boastful science arrogates in vain;
The obedient passions knowing each their part;
Calm light the head, and harmony the heart!

Yes, we must follow soon, will glad obey;
When a few suns have rolled their cares away,
Tired with vain life, will close the willing eye:
'Tis the great birthright of mankind to die.
Blessed be the bark! that wafts us to the shore,
Where death-divided friends shall part no more:
To join thee there,—here with thy dust repose,
Is all the hope thy hapless mother knows.

TO THE REVEREND PATRICK MURDOCH.

RECTOR OF STRADISHALL, IN SUFFOLK. 1738.

THUS safely low, my friend, thou canst not fall:
Here reigns a deep tranquillity o'er all;
No noise, no care, no vanity, no strife;
Men, woods, and fields, all breathe untroubled life.
Then keep each passion down, however dear;
Trust me, the tender are the most severe.
Guard, while 'tis thine, thy philosophic ease,
And ask no joy but that of virtuous peace;
That bids defiance to the storms of fate:
High bliss is only for a higher state!

STANZAS*

SENT TO GEORGE LYTTELTON, ESQ. SOON AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE,†

WRITTEN IN A COPY OF THE "SEASONS."

GO, little book, and find our Friend,
Who nature and the Muses loves,
Whose cares the public virtues blend
With all the softness of the groves.

* Now in the collection of George Daniel, Esq., of Canonbury Square, Islington.

† Lucy, daughter of Hugh Fortescue, Esq., Mr. Lyttelton's

A fitter time thou canst not choose,
His fostering friendship to repay;
Go then, and try, my rural muse,
To steal his widowed hours away.

AN ODE ON ÆOLUS'S HARP.*

[First printed in 1748, in Dodsley's Collection of Poems, vol. iv. p. 129.]

I.

ETHEREAL race, inhabitants of air!
Who hymn your God amid the secret grove;
Ye unseen beings, to my harp repair,
And raise majestic strains, or melt in love.

II.

Those tender notes, how kindly they upbraid,
With what soft woe they thrill the lover's heart!
Sure from the hand of some unhappy maid
Who died of love, these sweet complainings part.

III.

But hark! that strain was of a graver tone,
On the deep strings his hand some hermit throws;

first wife, whom he married in June, 1742, and who died in January, 1747.

* Æolus's harp is a musical instrument which plays with the wind, invented by Mr. Oswald; its properties are fully described in "The Castle of Indolence."—T.

Or he, the sacred Bard,* who sat alone
In the drear waste, and wept his people's woes.

IV.

Such was the song which Zion's children sung,
When by Euphrates' stream they made their plaint;
And to such sadly solemn notes are strung
Angelic harps, to soothe a dying saint.

V.

Methinks I hear the full celestial choir,
Through Heaven's high dome their awful anthem raise;
Now chanting clear, and now they all conspire
To swell the lofty hymn from praise to praise.

VI.

Let me, ye wandering spirits of the wind,
Who, as wild fancy prompts you, touch the string,
Smit with your theme, be in your chorus joined,
For till you cease, my Muse forgets to sing.

* Jeremiah.—T.

TO SERAPHINA.

THE wanton's charms, however bright,
Are like the false illusive light,
Whose flattering unauspicious blaze
To precipices oft betrays:
But that sweet ray your beauties dart,
Which clears the mind, and cleans the heart,
Is like the sacred queen of night,
Who pours a lovely gentle light
Wide o'er the dark, by wanderers blest,
Conducting them to peace and rest.
A vicious love depraves the mind,
'Tis anguish, guilt, and folly joined;
But Seraphina's eyes dispense
A mild and gracious influence;
Such as in visions angels shed
Around the heaven-illumined head.
To love thee, Seraphina, sure
Is to be tender, happy, pure;
'Tis from low passions to escape,
And woo bright virtue's fairest shape;
'Tis ecstacy with wisdom joined;
And heaven infused into the mind.

VERSES ADDRESSED TO AMANDA.*

[First printed in Lord Buchan's Essay on the Life of Thomson.]

AH, urged too late! from beauty's bondage free,
Why did I trust my liberty with thee?
And thou, why didst thou, with inhuman art,
If not resolved to take, seduce my heart?
Yes, yes, you said, for lovers' eyes speak true;
You must have seen how fast my passion grew:
And, when your glances chanced on me to shine,
How my fond soul ecstatic sprung to thine!
But mark me, fair one—what I now declare
Thy deep attention claims and serious care:
It is no common passion fires my breast;
I must be wretched, or I must be blest!
My woes all other remedy deny;
Or, pitying, give me hope, or bid me die!

* Amanda, as is stated in the Memoir, p. cxxxiv. was a Miss Young, who married Vice-Admiral Campbell.

TO THE SAME.

WITH A COPY OF THE "SEASONS."

ACCEPT, loved Nymph, this tribute due
To tender friendship, love, and you:*
But with it take what breathed the whole,
O take to thine the poet's soul.
If Fancy here her power displays,
And if a heart exalts these lays—
You, fairest, in that fancy shine,
And all that heart is fondly thine.

VERSES TO AMANDA.†

IN IMITATION OF TIBULLUS.

Huc ades, et teneræ morbos expelle puellæ,
Huc ades, intonsâ Phœbe superbe comâ, &c.
Tibulli Carmina, lib. IV. carm. iv.

COME, healing god, Apollo, come and aid,
Moved by the tears of love, my tender maid!
No more let sickness dim those radiant eyes
Which never know to cheat or to disguise.

* In another MS. the first two lines read:—
Accept, dear Nymph! a tribute due
To sacred friendship and to you.

† First printed in Phillimore's "Memoirs and Correspondence of George Lord Lyttelton," vol. i. p. 310.

If e'er my verse has pleased thy listening ear,
O, now be friendly, now propitious hear!
Bring every virtuous herb, each root and flower,
Of cooling juice, and salutary power.
Light is the task:—To touch a hand so fair,
Divine physician, will repay thy care.
My tears are fled; the god my suit approves;
He can't be wretched who sincerely loves.
Protecting Heaven, with more than common care,
Smiles on his hopes, and guards him from despair.
Raise from the pillow, raise thy languid head,
Come forth, my love, and quit thy sickly bed!
Come forth, my love! for thee the balmy Spring
Breathes every sweet; for thee the zephyrs bring
Their healing gales; for thee the graces lead
The smiling hours, and paint the flowery mead
As nature, drooping long beneath the reign
Of dreary winter, now revives again,
Calls all her beauties out, and charms us more
From what we suffered in their loss before;
So from thy tedious illness shalt thou rise
More sweetly fair; and in those languid eyes
And faded cheeks, returning health shall place
A fresher bloom, and more attractive grace.
Then shall my bounding heart forget its woe,
And think it never more a pain can know;
Then shall my Muse thy charms more gaily sing,
And hail thee as the nightingale the Spring.

ON MRS. MENDEZ' BIRTHDAY.

WHO WAS BORN ON VALENTINE'S DAY.*

THINE is the gentle day of love,
When youths and virgins try their fate;
When, deep retiring to the grove,
Each feathered songster weds his mate.

With tempered beams the skies are bright,
Earth decks in smiles her pleasing face;
Such is the day that gave thee light,
And speaks as such thy every grace.

AN ELEGY UPON JAMES THERBURN.

IN CHATTO.

NOW, Chatto, you're a dreary place,
Pale sorrow broods on ilka face;
Therburn has run his race,
* * * *
And now, and now, ah me, alas!
The carl lies dead.

* Printed in European Magazine, in 1792.

Having his paternoster said,
He took a dram and went to bed;
He fell asleep, and death was glad
That he had catched him;
For Therburn was e'en ill bested,
That none did watch him.

For had the carl but been aware,
That meagre death, who none does spare,
T'attempt sic things should ever dare,
As stop his pipe;
He might have come to flee or skare:
The greedy gipe.

How he'd had but a gill or twae,
Death wou'd nae got the victory sae,
Nor put poor Therburn o'er the brae,
Into the grave;
. . . . . .
. . . . . *
The fumbling fellow, some folks say,
Should be jobbed on baith night and day;
She had without'en better play,
Remained still,
Barren for ever and for aye,
Do what he will.

Therefore they say he got some help
In getting of the little whelp;
But passing that, it makes me yelp,
But what remead?
Death lent him sic a cursed skelp,
That now he's dead.

* The MS. is imperfect in this place.

Therburn, for evermore farewell,
And be thy grave baith dry and deep;
And rest thy carcass soft and well,
Free from . . . .
. . . . . no night . . . . . .
Disturb . . . . . .

SONGS.

A NUPTIAL SONG.

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN INSERTED IN THE FOURTH ACT OF SOPHONISBA, FIRST PRINTED IN 1729.

COME, gentle Venus! and assuage
A warring world, a bleeding age.
For nature lives beneath thy ray,
The wintry tempests haste away,
A lucid calm invests the sea,
Thy native deep is full of thee:
The flowering earth where'er you fly,
Is all o'er spring, all sun the sky.
A genial spirit warms the breeze;
Unseen among the blooming trees,
The feathered lovers tune their throat,
The desert growls a softened note,
Glad o'er the meads the cattle bound,
And love and harmony go round.
But chief into the human heart
You strike the dear delicious dart;

You teach us pleasing pangs to know,
To languish in luxurious woe,
To feel the generous passions rise,
Grow good by gazing, mild by sighs;
Each happy moment to improve,
And fill the perfect year with love.
Come, thou delight of heaven and earth!
To whom all creatures owe their birth;
Oh, come, sweet smiling! tender, come!
And yet prevent our final doom.
For long the furious god of war
Has crushed us with his iron car,
Has raged along our ruined plains,
Has soiled them with his cruel stains,
Has sunk our youth in endless sleep,
And made the widowed virgin weep.
Now let him feel thy wonted charms,
Oh, take him to thy twining arms!
And, while thy bosom heaves on his,
While deep he prints the humid kiss,
Ah, then! his stormy heart control,
And sigh thyself into his soul.
Thy son too, Cupid, we implore
To leave the green Idalian shore.
Be he, sweet god! our only foe:
Long let him draw the twanging bow,
Transfix us with his golden darts,
Pour all his quiver on our hearts,
With gentler anguish make us sigh,
And teach us sweeter deaths to die.*

* These last eight lines seem to have been omitted from every edition subsequent to that of 1738.

TO AMANDA.*

COME, dear Amanda, quit the town,
And to the rural hamlets fly;
Behold! the wintry storms are gone;
A gentle radiance glads the sky.

The birds awake, the flowers appear,
Earth spreads a verdant couch for thee;
'Tis joy and music all we hear,
'Tis love and beauty all we see.

Come, let us mark the gradual spring,
How peeps the bud, the blossom blows;
Till Philomel begins to sing,
And perfect May to swell the rose.

Even so thy rising charms improve,
As life's warm season grows more bright;
And opening to the sighs of love,
Thy beauties glow with full delight.

* This song was obligingly contributed by William Henry, present Lord Lyttelton, from a copy in Thomson's own hand, and was printed for the first time in the Aldine Edition.

TO AMANDA.

UNLESS with my Amanda blest,
In vain I twine the woodbine bower;
Unless to deck her sweeter breast,
In vain I rear the breathing flower.

Awakened by the genial year,
In vain the birds around me sing;
In vain the freshening fields appear:—
Without my love there is no Spring.

TO FORTUNE.*

FOR ever, Fortune, wilt thou prove
An unrelenting foe to love;
And, when we meet a mutual heart,
Come in between, and bid us part:

Bid us sigh on from day to day,
And wish, and wish the soul away;
Till youth and genial years are flown,
And all the life of life is gone?

* The Earl of Buchan calls this a "Song written in Thomson's early years, and afterwards shaped for his Amanda."

But busy, busy still art thou,
To bind the loveless joyless vow,
The heart from pleasure to delude,
And join the gentle to the rude.

[For pomp, and noise, and senseless show,
To make us Nature's joys forego,
Beneath a gay dominion groan,
And put the golden fetter on!]

For once, O Fortune! hear my prayer,
And I absolve thy future care:
All other blessings I resign,
Make but the dear Amanda mine!*

COME, GENTLE GOD.†

COME, gentle god of soft desire,
Come and possess my happy breast,
Not fury-like in flames and fire,
Or frantic folly's wildness drest;‡

* The original poem seems to have consisted of the first four verses; when afterwards "shaped for his Amanda," he omitted the fourth verse and substituted the last for it; Lord Buchan possessed the MS. in both forms.

† Printed in the Gentleman's Magazine, for 1736, p. 103.

‡ A MS. copy of this song has the following variations:—

In rapture, rage, and nonsense drest.

These are the vain disguise of love,
And, or bespeak dissembled pains;
Or else a fleeting fever prove,
The frantic passion of the veins.

But come in friendship's angel-guise;
Yet dearer thou than friendship art,
More tender spirit in thy eyes,
More sweet emotions at thy heart.

O, come with goodness in thy train,
With peace and pleasure void of storm,
And wouldst thou me for ever gain,
Put on Amanda's winning form.

TO HER I LOVE.

TELL me, thou soul of her I love,
Ah! tell me, whither art thou fled;
To what delightful world above,
Appointed for the happy dead?

Or dost thou, free, at pleasure, roam,
And sometimes share thy lover's woe;
Where, void of thee, his cheerless home
Can now, alas! no comfort know?

O! if thou hoverest round my walk,
While, under every well known tree,
I to thy fancied shadow talk,
And every tear is full of thee:

Should then the weary eye of grief,
Beside some sympathetic stream,
In slumber find a short relief,
Oh, visit thou my soothing dream!

TO THE GOD OF FOND DESIRE.

NE day the God of fond desire,
On mischief bent, to Damon said,
" Why not disclose your tender fire,
Not own it to the lovely maid?"

The shepherd marked his treacherous art,
And, softly sighing, thus replied:
" 'Tis true, you have subdued my heart,
But shall not triumph o'er my pride.

" The slave, in private only bears
Your bondage, who his love conceals;
But when his passion he declares,
You drag him at your chariot-wheels."

THE LOVER'S FATE.

ARD is the fate of him who loves,
Yet dares not tell his trembling pain,
But to the sympathetic groves,
But to the lonely listening plain.

Oh! when she blesses next your shade,
Oh! when her footsteps next are seen
In flowery tracts along the mead,
In fresher mazes o'er the green;

Ye gentle spirits of the vale,
To whom the tears of love are dear,
From dying lilies waft a gale,
And sigh my sorrows in her ear.

Oh! tell her what she cannot blame,
Though fear my tongue must ever bind;
Oh! tell her, that my virtuous flame
Is, as her spotless soul, refined.

Not her own guardian angel eyes
With chaster tenderness his care,
Not purer her own wishes rise,
Not holier her own sighs in prayer.

But, if at first, her virgin fear
Should start at love's suspected name,
With that of friendship soothe her ear—
True love and friendship are the same.

SWEET TYRANT LOVE.*

SWEET tyrant Love, but hear me now!
And cure while young this pleasing smart;
Or rather, aid my trembling vow,
And teach me to reveal my heart.

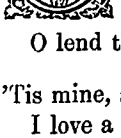
* From an MS. in Thomson's handwriting formerly in the possession of Mr. Ogle (Chaucer Ogle). It was first printed in Hone's Table Book.

Tell her whose goodness is my bane,
Whose looks have smiled my peace away,
Oh! whisper now she gives me pain,
Whilst undesigning, frank, and gay.

'Tis not for common charms I sigh,
For what the vulgar beauty call;
'Tis not a cheek, a lip, an eye;
But 'tis the soul that lights them all.

For that I drop the tender tear,
For that I make this artless moan,
Oh! sigh it, Love, into her ear,
And make the bashful lover known.

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.



NIGHTINGALE, best poet of the grove,
That plaintive strain can ne'er belong to thee,
Blest in the full possession of thy love:
O lend that strain, sweet Nightingale, to me!

'Tis mine, alas! to mourn my wretched fate:
I love a maid who all my bosom charms,
Yet lose my days without this lovely mate;
Inhuman fortune keeps her from my arms.

You, happy birds! by nature's simple laws
Lead your soft lives, sustained by nature's fare;
You dwell wherever roving fancy draws,
And love and song is all your pleasing care:

But we, vain slaves of interest and of pride,
Dare not be blest, lest envious tongues should blame:
And hence, in vain, I languish for my bride!
O mourn with me, sweet bird, my hapless flame.

TO MYRA.*

THOU, whose tender serious eyes
Expressive speak the mind I love;
The gentle azure of the skies,
The pensive shadows of the grove:

O mix their beauteous beams with mine,
And let us interchange our hearts;
Let all their sweetness on me shine,
Poured through my soul be all their darts.

Ah! 'tis too much! I cannot bear
At once so soft, so keen a ray:
In pity then, my lovely fair,
O turn those killing eyes away!

But what avails it to conceal
One charm, where nought but charms I see?
Their lustre then again reveal,
And let me, Myra, die of thee!

* Though addressed to Myra, these lines were meant for Amanda. They occur at the end of a letter addressed to Mrs. Robertson (Amanda's sister), at Bath, on Christmas Day, 1742, printed in the Earl of Buchan's Essay.

SONG.

WHEN blooming spring
Arrays the laughing fields in green,
Then flowers in open air are seen,
And warbling birds are heard to sing,
Almighty love
Doth sweetly move
All nature through;
Then tell me, Chloe, why are you
Averse thereto;
When blooming charms
Invite your lover's circling arms?
O be no longer coy
. . . . . to love and share of joy

SONGS IN THE MASQUE OF "ALFRED."*

TO PEACE.

PEACE! the fairest child of Heaven,
To whom the sylvan reign was given,
The vale, the fountain, and the grove,
With every softer scene of love:
Return, sweet Peace! and cheer the weeping swain!
Return, with Ease and Pleasure in thy train.

TO ALFRED.

FIRST SPIRIT.

HEAR, Alfred, father of the state,
Thy genius Heaven's high will declare!
What proves the hero truly great,
Is never, never to despair:
Is never to despair.

* The Masque of Alfred was the joint composition of Thomson and Mallet; hence the authorship of the following songs is somewhat doubtful; it was written in 1740. See Memoir, p. xc.

SECOND SPIRIT.

Thy hope awake, thy heart expand,
With all its vigour, all its fires.
Arise! and save a sinking land!
Thy country calls, and Heaven inspires.

BOTH SPIRITS.

Earth calls, and Heaven inspires.

"SWEET VALLEY, SAY."

SWEET valley, say, where, pensive lying,
For me, our children, England, sighing,
The best of mortals leans his head.
Ye fountains, dimpled by my sorrow,
Ye brooks that my complainings borrow,
O lead me to his lonely bed:
Or if my lover,
Deep woods, you cover,
Ah whisper where your shadows o'er him spread.

'Tis not the loss of pomp and pleasure,
Of empire or of tinsel treasure,
That drops this tear, that swells this groan:
No; from a nobler cause proceeding,
A heart with love and fondness bleeding,
I breathe my sadly pleasing moan,
With other anguish,
I scorn to languish,
For love will feel no sorrows but his own.

" FROM THOSE ETERNAL REGIONS."

FROM those eternal regions bright,
Where suns, that never set in night,
Diffuse the golden day:
Where Spring, unfading, pours around,
O'er all the dew-impearled ground,
Her thousand colours gay:
O whether on the fountain's flowery side,
Whence living waters glide,
Or in the fragrant grove,
Whose shade embosoms peace and love,
New pleasures all our hours employ,
And ravish every sense with every joy!
Great heirs of empire! yet unborn,
Who shall this island late adorn;
A monarch's drooping thought to cheer,
Appear! appear! appear!

CONTENTMENT.

IF those who live in shepherd's bower,
Press not the rich and stately bed:
The new-mown hay and breathing flower
A softer couch beneath them spread.

If those who sit at shepherd's board,
Soothe not their taste by wanton art;
They take what Nature's gifts afford,
And take it with a cheerful heart.

If those who drain the shepherd's bowl,
No high and sparkling wines can boast,
With wholesome cups they cheer the soul,
And crown them with the village toast.

If those who join in shepherd's sport,
Gay dancing on the daisied ground,
Have not the splendour of a court;
Yet love adorns the merry round.

RULE BRITANNIA!*

WITH VARIATIONS.

WHEN Britain first, at Heaven's command,
Arose from out the azure main,
This was the charter of the land,
And guardian angels sung this strain.
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves;
Britons never will be slaves."

* The authorship of this song has been disputed, but it is very generally assigned to Thomson, and was actually published in Edinburgh with his initials in the second edition of a well-known song-book, entitled "The Charmer," during Mallet's lifetime; and although even then it was popular, and Mallet had several friends in Edinburgh, he did not lay claim to the authorship, or disputed its having been written by Thomson.

The nations, not so blest as thee,
Must, in their turns, to tyrants fall;
While thou shalt flourish great and free,
The dread and envy of them all.
"Rule," &c.

Still more majestic shalt thou rise,
More dreadful from each foreign stroke;
As the loud blast that tears the skies
Serves but to root thy native oak.
"Rule," &c.

Thee haughty tyrants ne'er shall tame;
All their attempts to bend thee down
Will but arouse thy generous flame,
But work their woe, and thy renown.
"Rule," &c.

To thee belongs the rural reign;
Thy cities shall with commerce shine;
All thine shall be the subject main;
And every shore it circles, thine.
"Rule," &c.

The Muses, still with freedom found,
Shall to thy happy coast repair:
Blest isle! with matchless beauty crowned,
And manly hearts to guard the fair:
"Rule, Britannia, rule the waves,
Britons never will be slaves."

PROLOGUES AND EPILOGUES.

EPILOGUE TO AGAMEMNON.*

UR bard, to modern epilogue a foe,
Thinks such mean mirth but deadens generous woe;
Dispels in idle air the moral sigh,
And wipes the tender tear from Pity's eye:
No more with social warmth the bosom burns;
But all the unfeeling selfish man returns.†

Thus he began:—And you approved the strain;
Till the next couplet sunk to light and vain.
You checked him there.—To you, to reason just,
He owns he triumphed in your kind disgust.
Charmed by your frown, by your displeasure graced,
He hails the rising virtue of your taste.
Wide will its influence spread as soon as known:
Truth, to be loved, needs only to be shown.

* Produced at Drury Lane, April 6th, 1738.

† Thomson observes, "Another Epilogue was spoken after the first representation of the play, which began with the first six lines of this; but the rest of that epilogue having been very justly disliked by the audience, this was substituted in its place."

Confirm it, once, the fashion to be good:
(Since fashion leads the fool, and awes the rude)
No petulance shall wound the public ear;
No hand applaud what honour shuns to hear:
No painful blush the modest cheek shall stain;
The worthy breast shall heave with no disdain.
Chastised to decency, the British stage
Shall oft invite the fair, invite the sage:
Both shall attend well-pleased, well-pleased depart;
Or if they doom the verse, absolve the heart.

PROLOGUE TO MALLET'S MUSTAPHA.*

INCE Athens first began to draw mankind,
To picture life, and show the impassioned mind;
The truly wise have ever deemed the stage
The moral school of each enlightened age.
There, in full pomp, the tragic Muse appears,
Queen of soft sorrows, and of useful fears.
Faint is the lesson reason's rules impart:
She pours it strong, and instant through the heart.
If virtue is her theme, we sudden glow
With generous flame; and what we feel, we grow.
If vice she paints, indignant passions rise;
The villain sees himself with loathing eyes.
His soul starts, conscious, at another's groan,
And the pale tyrant trembles on his throne.

* Brought out at Drury Lane, 13th February, 1739.

To-night, our meaning scene attempts to show
What fell events from dark suspicion flow;
Chief when it taints a lawless monarch's mind,
To the false herd of flattering slaves confined,
The soul sinks gradual to so dire a state;
Even excellence but serves to feed its hate:
To hate remorseless cruelty succeeds,
And every worth, and every virtue bleeds.
Behold, our author at your bar appears,
His modest hopes depressed by conscious fears.
Faults he has many—but to balance these,
His aim is honest and he strives to please;
All slighter errors let indulgence spare,
And be his equal trial full and fair.
For this best British privilege we call,
Then, as he merits, let him stand or fall.

PROLOGUE TO TANCRED AND SIGISMUNDA.*

BOLD is the man! who, in this nicer age
Presumes to tread the chaste corrected stage.
Now, with gay tinsel arts, we can no more
Conceal the want of Nature's sterling ore.
Our spells are vanished, broke our magic wand,
That used to waft you over sea and land.

* Brought out at Drury Lane, 18th March, 1745.

efore your light the fairy people fade,
he demons fly—the ghost itself is laid.
n vain of martial scenes the loud alarms,
'he mighty prompter thundering out to arms,
'he playhouse posse clattering from afar,
he close-wedged battle, and the din of war.
low, even the senate seldom we convene;
'he yawning fathers nod behind the scene.
'our taste rejects the glittering false sublime,
'o sigh in metaphor, and die in rhyme.
ligh rant is tumbled from his gallery throne:
)escription, dreams, nay, similes, are gone.

What shall we then? to please you how devise,
Whose judgment sits not in your ears and eyes?
Thrice happy could we catch great Shakespeare's art,
To trace the deep recesses of the heart;
His simple plain sublime, to which is given
'o strike the soul with darted flame from heaven;
'ould we awake soft Otway's tender woe,
'he pomp of verse and golden lines of Rowe.

We to your hearts apply; let them attend;
3efore their silent candid bar we bend.
if warmed, they listen, 'tis our noblest praise;
If cold, they wither all the Muse's bays.

EPILOGUE TO TANCRED AND SIGISMUNDA.

CRAMMED to the throat with wholesome, moral stuff,
Alas! poor audience! you have had enough.
Was ever hapless heroine of a play
In such a piteous plight as ours to-day?
Was ever woman so by love betrayed?
Matched with two husbands, and yet—die a maid!
But bless me!—hold—What sounds are these I hear?—
I see the Tragic Muse herself appear.

The back scene opens, and discovers a romantic sylvan landscape; from which Mrs. Cibber, in the character of the Tragic Muse, advances slowly to music, and speaks the following lines:—

Hence with your flippant epilogue, that tries
To wipe the virtuous tear from British eyes;
That dares my moral, tragic scene profane,
With strains—at best, unsuiting, light, and vain.
Hence from the pure unsullied beams that play
In yon fair eyes where virtue shines—Away!

Britons, to you from chaste Castalian groves,
Where dwell the tender, oft unhappy loves;
Where shades of heroes roam, each mighty name,
And court my aid to rise again to fame;

To you I come, to Freedom's noblest seat,
And in Britannia fix my last retreat.
In Greece and Rome, I watched the public weal,
The purple tyrant trembled at my steel:
Nor did I less o'er private sorrows reign,
And mend the melting heart with softer pain.
On France and you then rose my brightening star,
With social ray; the arts are ne'er at war.
O, as your fire and genius stronger blaze,
As yours are generous Freedom's bolder lays,
Let not the Gallic taste leave yours behind,
In decent manners and in life refined;
Banish the motley mode to tag low verse,
The laughing ballad to the mournful hearse.
When through five acts your hearts have learnt to glow,
Touched with the sacred force of honest woe;
O keep the dear impression on your breast,
Nor idly lose it for a wretched jest.

FINIS.

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